

HE'S BACK!

MARVEL PREVIEW FEATURING

KULL™

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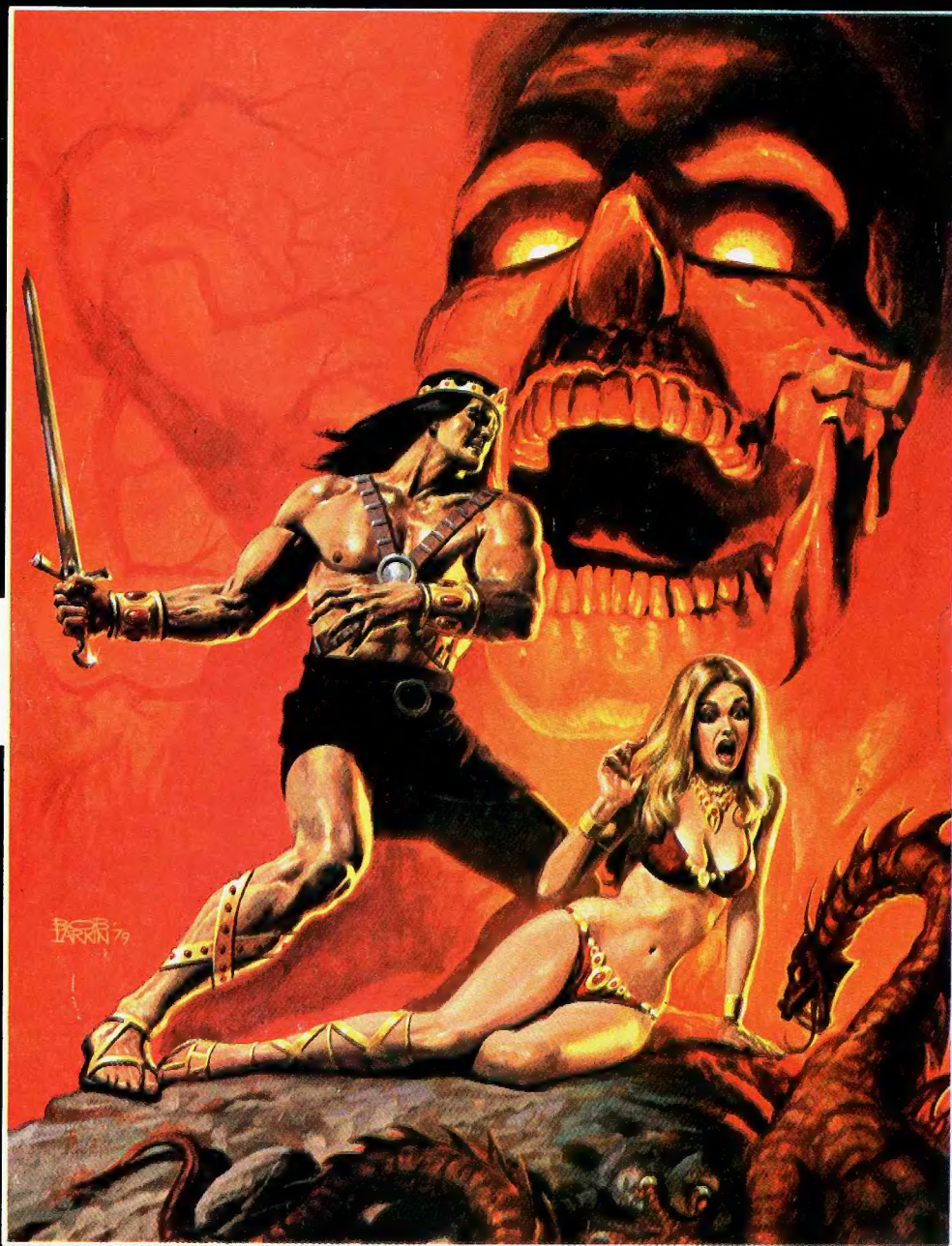
THE DESTROYER

**Kull Battles For
His Life Against
The Malevolent
Magic Of
THULSA
DOOM**

**—In A Time-Lost
Tale Of Swords
And Sorcery!**

ALL NEW!

**Plus: Epic
Adventure With
Swashbuckling
Solomon Kane!**





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MARVEL PREVIEW
 featuring

KULL

THE DESTROYER



Vol. 1 No. 19
Summer 1979

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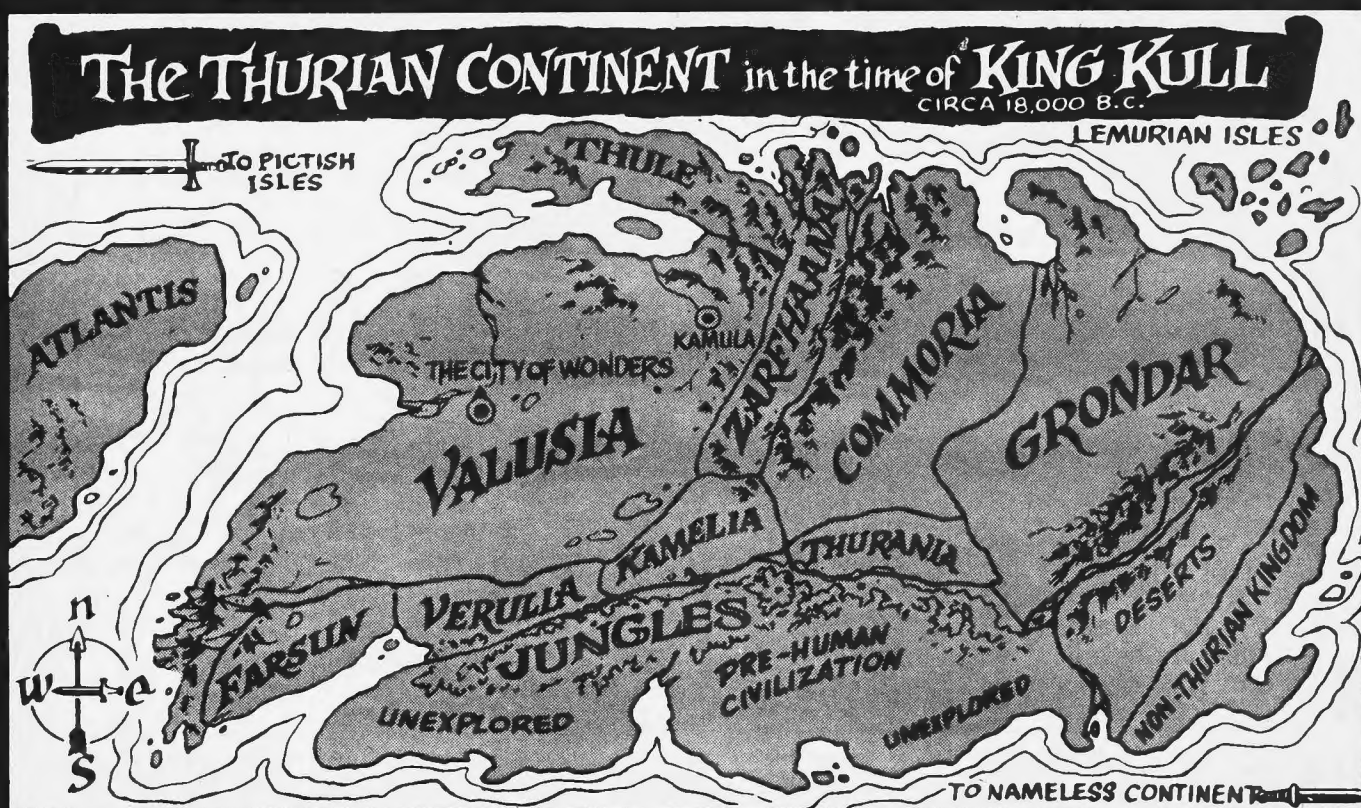
Table Of Contents

RIDERS BEYOND THE SUNRISE.....	5
King Kull, barbarian king out of age-lost Atlantis, rides into the mystic east to answer a challenge. But will he e'er return again? <i>Roy Thomas, Sal Buscema, and Tony DeZuniga</i> adapt the story by <i>Robert E. Howard</i> , as completed by <i>Lin Carter</i> .	
TIGER OF ATLANTIS	38
The life of Kull the Destroyer, according to Marvel Comics—compiled for the first time, by <i>Jim Neal</i> .	
A KULL PORTFOLIO.....	42
By popular demand! <i>Marie and John Severin</i> , Kull's most famous illustrators, once again render Valusia's warrior monarch. Eight pages of sumptuous splendor!	
THE FOOTFALLS WITHIN.....	51
A tale of Solomon Kane, in the wilds of Africa— <i>REH's</i> great adventure, adapted by <i>Don Glut, Will Meugniot, and Steve Gan</i> .	

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Of that epoch known by the Nemedian chroniclers as the Pre-Cataclysmic Age, little is known except the latter part, and that is veiled in the mists of legendry. The Thurian civilization was crumbling; their armies were composed largely of barbarian mercenaries. Picts, Atlanteans, and Lemurians were their generals, their statesmen, often their kings. And the greatest of these kings was Kull....

(Adapted from "The Hyborian Age" by Robert E. Howard)



KULL THE DESTROYER!™

RIDERS BEYOND THE SUNRISE

THE NEWS IS HEARD THROUGHOUT THE LAND!

KING KULL ONCE MORE SITS THE TOPAZ THRONE OF VALUSIA, MIGHTIEST NATION ON THE THURIAN CONTINENT-- THE THRONE HE WRESTED BACK, WITH HIS OWN CRIMSONED SWORD, FROM THE SKULL-FACED SORCERER CALLED THULSA DOOM!

YET, THERE IS MORE TO KINGSHIP THAN BATTLE AND BLOODLETTING, AS THE ATLANTIAN-BORN BARBARIAN-BECOME-MONARCH ALREADY HAS REASON TO RECALL:

...AND **THUS**, O KING, DID **LALA-AH**, COUNTESS OF FANARA, FLEE WITH HER BASE-BORN LOVER...

...BRINGING **SHAME** TO HER HUSBAND-TO-BE AND TO THE NATION OF VALUSIA ITSELF!

SIRE?

SIRE... HAVE YOU BEEN LISTENING TO ME?

WHAT ELSE COULD I HAVE HEARD, DEAR COUNCILOR, WITH YOUR INCESSANT DRONING RESOUNDING THROUGH MY BRAIN?

ADAPTED FROM A STORY FRAGMENT BY ROBERT E. HOWARD, CREATOR OF KULL (WITH SPECIAL THANKS TO LIN CARTER FOR USE OF THE TITLE)



YOU HAVE EVER BEEN **TOO HARD**, MAJESTY, ON THOSE OF US WHO HAVE THE **BEST INTEREST** OF THE NATION AT HEART.

OUR CUSTOMS ARE **NOT** THOSE YOU LEARNED AS A BOY IN FAR-OFF **ATLANTIS**, SIRE...



"FOR, TRUE IT IS, NO DOUBT, THAT **KA-YANNA**, THE COUNTESS' FORMER BE-TROTHED, IS UGLY AS A **RHINOCEROS**, AND EVEN UGLIER OF DISPOSITION...

...BUT, WHAT HAS **LOVE** TO DO WITH **MARRIAGE** BY **NOBILITY**?



"SHE HAS COMMITTED A **GROSS INSULT** TO THE TRADITIONS OF THE LAND-- AND THUS TO ITS **KING**--

"--BY DESERTING **KA-YANNA** ALMOST AT THE VERY **ALTAR**--



"--AND FLEEING EASTWARD WITH **FENAR**, THE **FARSUNIAN** ADVENTURER, IN THE DEAD OF NIGHT.



"**KA-YANNA**, OF COURSE, HAS VOWED VENGEANCE-- AND SENT **HORSEMEN** IN PURSUIT OF THE WOMAN AND HER LOVER.

BRING BACK THE COUNTESS **ALIVE**--

--AND THE MAN, IN **TWO PIECES**!



AND **MORE**, SIRE: THE YOUNG COUNTESS HAS A STRAIN OF **ROYAL BLOOD**!

AS YOU KNOW BY **VALUSIAN** TRADITION, NOBLE-WOMEN MAY MARRY FOREIGNERS ONLY WITH THE CONSENT OF THE **STATE**-- AND HERE, CONSENT WAS NEITHER GIVEN NOR EVEN ASKED!

LORD COUNCILOR TU, HOWEVER, MIGHT AS WELL BE SPEAKING TO THE THREE-PRONGED **CROWN** ITSELF--

--AS TO HIM WHO WEARS IT.

FOR, KULL IS THINKING BACK, AS SO OFTEN BEFORE, TO THE **BOYHOOD** ALLUDED TO BY THE AGED, WHINING COURTIER BEFORE HIM:



A **NAKED MAN-CUB** HE WAS, THEN...
RAISED BY **FIERCE TIGERS** IN THE
ATLANTEAN VALLEY NAMED FOR THEIR
KIND...

...HIS TRUE **ORIGINS** AS FORGOTTEN AS
HIS NAME AND PEOPLE.



THEN CAME MEMBERS OF THE **SEA-MOUNTAIN TRIBE**, WHO SLEW HIS STRIPED MOTHER AND GAVE HIM ONE AS NIGH-HAIRLESS AS HIMSELF.

THEY GAVE
HIM ALSO
A NAME:



KULL!

**KULL OF
THE TIGER
TOTEM!**

**KULL THE
DESTROYER!**



BUT FINALLY, CAME THE DAY HE AND TWO COMPANIONS RETURNED TO THEIR HOME-VILLAGE, TO SEE A **LOATHSOME HUMAN SACRIFICE** IN PROGRESS.

THE GIRL HAD DARED TO LOVE A **LEMURIAN PIRATE**...AND SO SHE MUST DIE!

THAT, TOO, WAS A... TRADITION.



YET, WHEN THE GIRL'S **PLEADING EYES** MET THOSE OF THE YOUTHFUL **KULL**...



...HE KNEW THAT **TRADITION MUST BE DEFIED!**



HE SLEW HER
FROM AFAR, BE-
FORE THE FIRE
COULD DO THE
TASK MORE
PAINFULLY--



-- THEN LEAPED INTO
THE WAITING SEA,
TO ESCAPE THE
REVENGE OF HIS
WRATHFUL FORMER
TRIBESMEN.



SWIMMING
FAR FROM
SHORE, HE
HAILED A
VESSEL
THERE--

-- LEARNING
TOO LATE THAT
IT WAS A
LEMURIAN
WAR-
GALLEY--



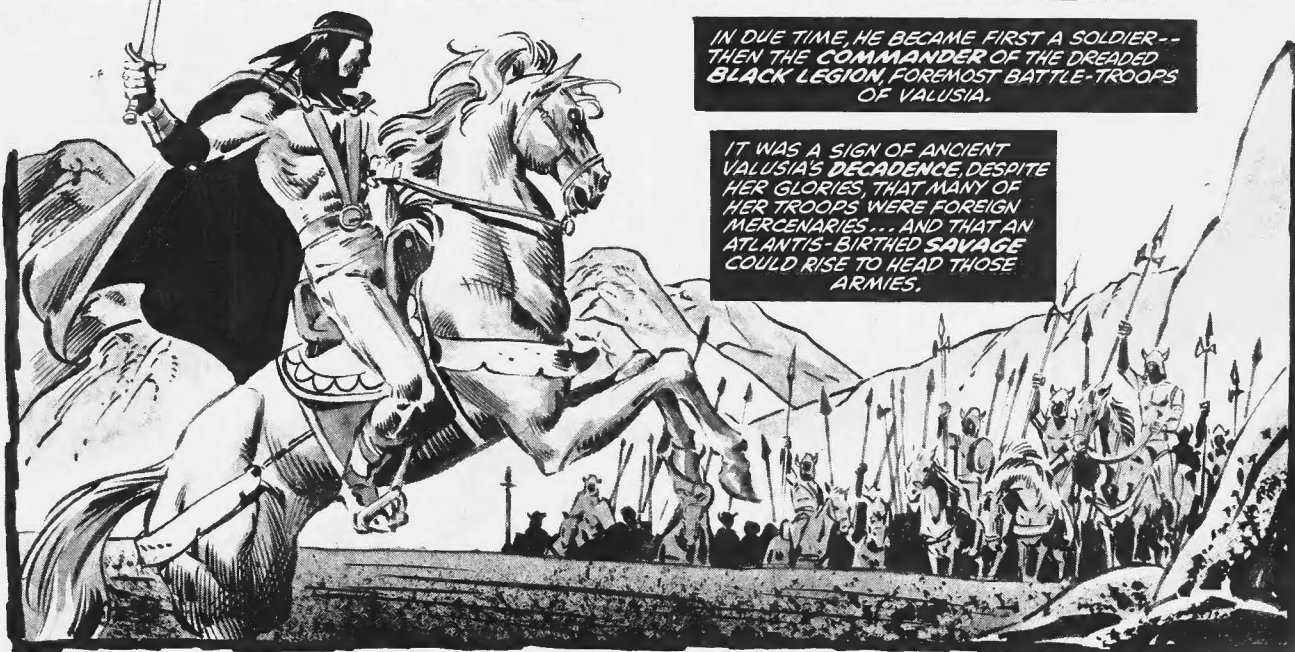
-- AT WHOSE BACK-
BREAKING OARS HE
LABORED, FOR THE
NEXT TWO TORTUROUS
YEARS.

AT LENGTH, HOW-
EVER HE ESCAPED
THE PIRATES,
AS WELL--



-- BECOMING FIRST AN OUTLAW, THEN A GLADIATOR
IN THE ARENAS OF VALUSIA.

FINALLY, HE HAD
FOUND HIS TRUE
CALLING.



IN DUE TIME, HE BECAME FIRST A SOLDIER--
THEN THE COMMANDER OF THE DREADED
BLACK LEGION, FOREMOST BATTLE-TROOPS
OF VALUSIA.

IT WAS A SIGN OF ANCIENT
VALUSIA'S DECADENCE, DESPITE
HER GLORIES, THAT MANY OF
HER TROOPS WERE FOREIGN
MERCENARIES... AND THAT AN
ATLANTIS-BIRTHED SAVAGE
COULD RISE TO HEAD THOSE
ARMIES.



--AND THERE, IN THE VERY SHADOW OF THE TOPAZ THRONE--

AT LAST, KULL WAS FORCED TO REVOLT AGAINST THE DESPOTIC KING BORNA--



--HE SLEW THE AXE-WIELDING TYRANT!

REGICIDE, TOO, IS A TRADITION OF SORTS.



ON THAT DAY HE WAS KULL OF ATLANTIS NO LONGER-- BUT KING KULL--

--BARBARIAN MONARCH OF VALUSIA AND ITS CAPITAL, THE CITY OF WONDERS!



HE FOUND, HOWEVER, THAT A THRONE WAS NEARLY AS HARD TO KEEP AS TO WIN.

IT WAS THULSA DOOM, UNDEAD WIZARD FROM THE LOST LANDS, WHO TOOK HIS CROWN FROM HIM--

--HURLING HIM INTO A DUNGEON TO AWAIT A BLOODY EXECUTION.



FLEEING, KULL THEN BEGAN THE GRIM SEARCH FOR ALLIES TO HELP HIM REGAIN HIS THRONE... AND IN TIME BROUGHT A MIGHTY PALACE TUMBLING ABOUT THE HEAD OF THE MACABRE MAGE.

FOR A SECOND TIME, KULL WAS KING IN VALUSIA--

--AND THIS TIME, HE MEANT TO KEEP THE HARD-WON PRIZE!

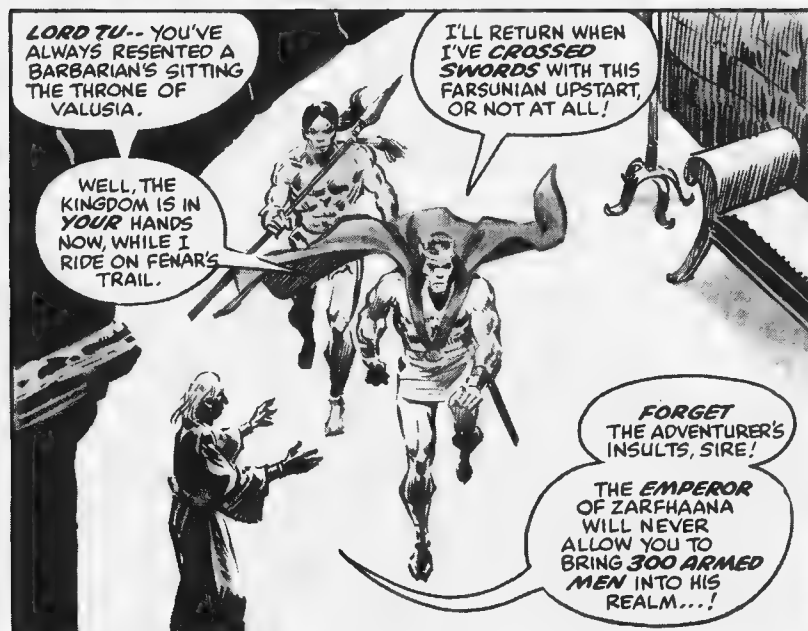
BUT STILL, OFTTIMES, HE WONDERS IF IT'S ALL WORTH IT, WHEN HE HEARS THE NIGH-CRACKING VOICE OF LORD TU INTONING ABOUT--

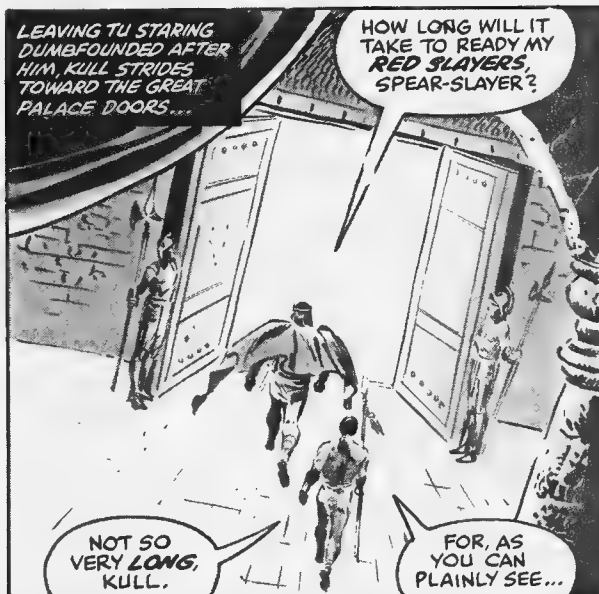
--TRADITION, MILORD KING! VALUSIA WILL BECOME THE SCORN OF ALL NATIONS. IF WE ALLOW MEN FROM OTHER LANDS TO TAKE OUR WOMEN WITH IMPUNITY! THEREFORE, WE MUST--

STILL HARPING ON TRADITION, ARE YOU, COUNCILOR?

IN VALKA'S NAME, I'VE HEARD LITTLE ELSE SINCE FIRST I PRESSED THE THRONE OF VALUSIA!







THERE, BEFORE THE PALACE THREE HUNDRED MEN SIT THEIR HORSES-- KULL'S CAVALRY, THE RED SLAYERS-- THE MOST AWESOME SOLDIERY OF THE PRE-CATACLYSMIC AGE!



THE THRONGS OF VALUSIA GAZE WITH AWESTRUCK CURIOSITY AS THE CLATTER OF SILVER HOOVES RESOUNDS ABOVE THE BABBLE AND CLATTER OF COMMERCE.

BRONZE ARMOR GLINTS IN THE SUN; THE PENNONS ON THE LONG LANCES STREAM BACKWARD.

MOST OF THE ON-LOOKERS CHEER LUSTILY, WHETHER OUT OF SINCERITY OR NEEDLESS FEAR OF REPRISAL...

THEY WONDER AS COMMON FOLK EVER DO, OF THE MYSTERIOUS DESTINATION OF THEIR RULERS...

...THEN THEY TURN BACK TO THEIR EVERYDAY TASKS, AS SUCH PEOPLE ALSO DO, NO MATTER WHERE KINGS RIDE.

ALONG THE BROAD WHITE STREETS OF THE CITY OF WONDERS SWEEP THE KING AND HIS HORSEMEN...

...TILL ITS GOLDEN SPIRES AND SAPPHIRE TOWERS ARE BUT A SILVER SHIMMER IN THE DISTANCE...

...AND THE GREEN HILLS OF ZALGARA LOOM MAJESTICALLY BEFORE THEM.

SUNSET FINDS THEM ENCAMPED HIGH ON THE SLOPES OF THE MOUNTAINS.

THE WARRIORS, DROPPING SOME OF THE RESTRAINTS THEY FEEL AMONG CITY-DWELLERS, SING OLD REFRAINS... SWAP OFF TOLD TALES.

BUT, KING KULL WALKS APART, BEYOND THE GLOW OF THE CAMPFIRES, TO GAZE OUT ACROSS THE MYSTIC VISTAS OF CRAG AND VALLEY...

OH, I KNOW A GAL,
SHE LIVES IN VALUSIA--
IF YOU GOT SOME
MONEY--

...NOR DOES HE HEAR THE ROISTEROUS LAUGHTER, THE BAWDY SONGS.

THE HILLS OF THIS EASTERN PART OF VALUSIA HAVE ALWAYS HELD A FASCINATION FOR KULL.

THEY BRING TO HIS MIND THE MOUNTAINS OF ATLANTIS, WHOSE SNOWY HEIGHTS HE SCALED AS A YOUTH, ERE HE FARED FORTH INTO THE GREAT WORLD TO WRITE HIS NAME ACROSS THE STARS AND MAKE AN ANCIENT THRONE HIS SEAT.

YET, THERE IS A DIFFERENCE:

THE CRAGS OF ATLANTIS RISE STARK AND GAUNT--BRUTAL AND TERRIBLE WITH YOUTH, EVEN AS KULL; VAST AGE HAS NOT SOFTENED THEIR MIGHT.

THE HILLS OF ZALGARA RISE UP LIKE ANCIENT GODS, WITH GREEN GROVES AND WAVING VERDURE LAUGHING UPON THEIR SHOULDERS; THEIR OUTLINE IS SOFT AND FLOWING.

AGE-- AGE, THINKS KULL--MANY A DRIFTING CENTURY HAS WORN AWAY THEIR CRAGGY SPLENDOR.

THEY ARE MELLOW AND BEAUTIFUL WITH AGE; ANCIENT MOUNTAINS DREAMING OF BYGONE KINGS WHOSE CARELESS FEET ONCE TROD THEIR SWORD.

THEN, LIKE A RED WAVE, THE THOUGHT
OF FENAR'S INSULT SWEEPS AWAY
THESE BROODINGS...

HELFARA AND HOTATH
DOOM MY SOUL TO EVER-
LASTING HELL IF I
WREAK NOT MY
VENGEANCE ON
THE FARSIAN!

THE NIGHT
BREEZE WHISPERS
AMONG THE TREES,
AS IF IN ANSWER
TO THE HEATHEN
VOW.

HOURLY LATER,
SCARLET DAWN
BURSTS LIKE A
RED ROSE OVER
THE ZALGARAN
HILLS...

...THE FIRST GLINTS
OF MORNING SHINING
ON THE ARMOR AND
SPEAR-POINTS OF
AN ARMY ALREADY
ON THE MARCH.

WE RIDE INTO THE
SUNRISE, BRULE.

AYE, KELKOR--
AND SOME OF US
RIDE BEYOND
IT, PERHAPS.

SO BE IT!
THAT IS THE
DESTINY OF
A WARRIOR.

THREE DAYS' JOURNEY BRINGS
THEM ACROSS THE CAMOONIAN
DESERT AND INTO THE LOW HILLS
THAT MARK THE CONFINES OF THE
NEIGHBORING KINGDOM OF
ZARFHAANA, WHERE--

LOOK YOU, KULL!
TWO ZARFHAANIAN
RIDERS, COMING
FAST!

LET THEM COME.
WE'VE NOTHING
TO HIDE.

HALT, IN THE
NAME OF THIS
LAND'S KING!
WHO RIDES
HERE?

I AM
KULL OF
VALUSIA.

I RIDE
ON THE
TRAIL OF
ONE NAMED
FENAR,
WHO HAS
DISHONORED
MY LAND.

SEEK NOT TO *HINDER* MY PASSING; I WILL BE RESPONSIBLE TO YOUR
EMPEROR FOR MY MEN'S BEHAVIOR, AND ALL *GOODS* WE TAKE FROM
FARLANDS ALONG THE WAY WILL
BE AMPLY PAID FOR.

THEN
PASS,
KULL OF
VALUSIA!

WE SHALL
RELAY YOUR
MESSAGE
TO OUR
LORD THE
KING.

AND, AS THREE HUNDRED CLASHING HOOVES
FADE IN THE DISTANCE...

I WIN OUR WAGER, THEN!
THE KING OF VALUSIA
RIDES HIMSELF.

THESE BARBARIANS
AVENGE THEIR
OWN WRONGS,
IT SEEMS.

HAD THE KING
BEEN A
VALUSIAN,
BY VALKA, YOU
HAD LOST!

THAT NIGHT, AROUND A CAMPFIRE...

I SUGGEST, LORD KING, THAT FARSDUN FARED EAST INSTEAD OF SOUTH AND WEST TO HIS HOMELAND--

--BECAUSE THOSE BORDERS ARE TOO WELL GUARDED FOR HIM AND THE COUNTESS TO PASS, WHILE EASTWARD--!

PERHAPS. PERHAPS....

SOME DAWNS LATER, THEY ARE APPROACHING ZARFHAANA'S FRONTIER CITY OF TALUNIA...

IF YOU'RE RIGHT, KELKOR, OUR PREY WILL PASS FROM HERE INTO THE WASTELANDS OF GRONDAR, THEN TURN SOUTH TO GAIN FARSDUN, THROUGH THE SMALL PRINCIPALITIES OF THURANIA.

TRULY, A MOST ROUNDABOUT PATH!

FOR A MOST DEVIANT MAN, O KING.

...AYE, LORD KING OF VALUSIA...OUR KING HAS SENT WORD YOUR VISIT IS TO BE CONSIDERED A FRIENDLY ONE, UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE-- BUT HE DOES NOT WANT 300 RED SLAYERS WITHIN THE GATES OF ANY CITY IN THE LAND.

NOR DO I; THEY'LL CAMP OUT OF SIGHT, NEARBY.

DID A FARSDUN WARRIOR ENTER THE CITY OF LATE, WITH A VALUSIAN LADY?

SOME DAYS PAST--THOUGH I KNOW NOT IF THEY'VE LEFT OR NOT.

LISTEN, THEN: I AM MERELY A WANDERING VALUSIAN NOBLE, ACCOMPANIED BY A PICTISH COMPANION...DO YOU UNDERSTAND?

YOUR WORDS AND ACTIONS SPEAK WITH A CRYSTAL CLEARNESS, LORD KING.

HIS CROWN LEFT IN THE KEEPING OF THE LEMURIA-BORN KELKOR, KULL AND BRULE ENTER THE CITY ALONE...

WE DRAW MANY STARES, MY FRIEND.

AYE, KULL. BUT, IN A BORDER TOWN, MEN SOON ADJUST TO STRANGERS... OF ANY RACE.

THE DAY'S SEARCH IS FRUITLESS-- THEN, THAT NIGHT--

HAIL, KING KULL! WHAT SEEK YE IN TALUNIA?

EH? KULL--LOOK OUT!

HOW DO YOU KNOW MY NAME, HAG?





THEN, DRAWING HIS GREAT BROADSWORD, KULL SILENTLY RENEWS HIS VENGEANCE-VOW TO THE PAGAN GODS OF DISTANT ATLANTIS --



HIS FELINE-GIFTED EYES QUICKLY BECOME ACCUSTOMED TO THE BLACKNESS, AS HE ASCENDS THE STAIRS...



--ONLY TO FALL BACK UNCONSCIOUS
AS THE HILT OF KULL'S BLADE FINDS
THE TOP OF HIS CRANIUM!



STRAINING HIS SENSES FOR ANY
SIGN THAT THE STRUGGLE WAS
HEARD, KULL HEARS... ONLY THE
SILENCE.



...HEARING FROM BEYOND IT, A LOW CON-
FUSED MUMBLE...AS OF PEOPLE
WHISPERING...
A GUARDED MOVE-
MENT WITHIN.



THIS, HOWEVER IS KULL--
KING KULL--



--AND NO PANEL OF
HALF-ROTTED
WOOD WILL KEEP
THIS SCION OF
ATLANTIS FROM HIS
RIGHTEOUS REVENGE!





ONLY THE
SHADOWY SIGHT
OF TWO FORMS
CLAMBERING
THROUGH THE
WINDOW, ONE
CARRYING THE
OTHER!

FENAR! I CALL
UPON YOU TO
MAKE GOOD
THE INSULT YOU
BESTOWED
UPON ME!

LET BLADE
FACE BLADE--
AND THE COUNTLESS
GOES WITH THE
WINNER, BACK TO
VALUSIA OR OFF
WITH YOU TO
FARSUN!

BUT, THERE IS NO
SOUND FROM THE
FIGURES, SAVE A SILVERY
MOCKING LAUGH--



--A SOUND HE KNOWS
COMES FROM THE THROAT
OF THE ADVENTURER WHO
CHALLENGED HIM!

HAHAHAHA



NO MAN LAUGHS
AT KULL OF
VALUSIA,
BY VALKA!

IF NOT WITH SWORDS,
THEN WITH MY BARE
HANDS I'LL SLAY YOU
AND TAKE LALA-AH BACK TO--



YET, THE WINDOW
IS EMPTY EVEN
AS HE REACHES
THE SILL--



AND, ALL KULL GETS
FOR HIS HEADLONG LEAP--

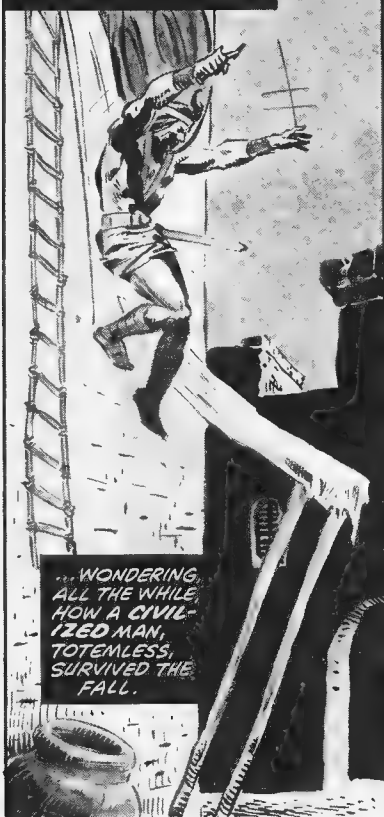


--ARE THE SIGHT
OF HIS FOE
ESCAPING
FAR BELOW

HAHAHAHA

--AND, ONCE MORE
THAT MOCKING
LAUGH, FLOATING
UP LIKE A VELVET
SOFT BLOW TO
THE FACE!

KULL JUMPS, TIGERISH, TO THE STREETS BELOW...



...WONDERING, ALL THE WHILE, HOW A CIVILIZED MAN, TOTEMLESS, SURVIVED THE FALL.

ONCE THERE, HOWEVER, HE FACES A NEW ENIGMA...



FOR, THEY ARE ALREADY LOST IN THE MAZE OF STREETS AMID A CITY EVEN THEY KNOW BETTER THAN HE.

STILL, HE CAN FIND THE EAST GATE EASILY ENOUGH, AND--



BRULE! DID THE FARSUNIAN AND THE COUNTESS COME WITHIN SIGHT OF YOU HERE?

NAY! THE HORSES ARE HERE-- BUT NONE HAVE COME FOR THEM.

BUT-- FENAR SAID HE WOULD--

DON'T YOU SEE, OLD WOMAN? YOUR TREACHERY WAS SO TRANSPARENT TO HIM, HE HAD SECURED THESE HORSES ONLY AS A RUSE.

HIS TRUE ROUTE OF ESCAPE IS DOUBTLESS ANOTHER GATE--



--AND WE CAN NEVER STOP HIM NOW FROM FLEEING THE CITY!

SWIFTLY BRULE! HASTE TO THE CAMP AND HAVE THE MEN MOUNT!

I KNOW I CANNOT DISSUADE YOU, KULL, SO I'LL BUT SAY--

I FOLLOW FENAR'S TRAIL!



--TAKE CARE!

THE AGED CRONE WATCHES THEM GO, SHAKING WITH UNHOLY MIRTH.

HO HO HO! THEY RIDE INTO THE SUNRISE--



--AND WHO RIDES BACK FROM BEYOND THE SUNRISE??



BEYOND THE RIVER OF THE DEAD

PART II OF "RIDERS BEYOND THE SUNRISE" BY ROBERT E. HOWARD AND LIN CARTER

ALL NIGHT KING KULL HAS RIDDEN LIKE A DEMON, STRIVING TO PARE AWAY PRECIOUS MOMENTS FROM THE LEAD WHICH FELNAR AND THE COUNTESS LALA-AH HAVE GAINED... ALONG A TRAIL WHICH LEADS DEAD EAST.

EAST TO GRONDAR, EVEN AS BRULE THE SPEAR-SLAYER PREDICTED

EAST TO GRONDAR-- WHICH CIVILIZED VALUSIANS, IN HUSHED WHISPERS, CALL THE SHADOWY LAND.

AND, AS HE BENDS LOW OVER HIS HORSE'S NECK, ITS FLOWING MANE WHIPPING HIS FACE AS HE DRIVES THE SPURS AGAINST ITS SIDE KULL REMEMBERS

BUT STILL, THE HAUNTING WORDS OF THE OLD CRONE ECHO MADLY, MOCKINGLY, THROUGH HIS BRAIN.



"WHO RIDES BACK FROM BEYOND THE SUNRISE?"

THE STARS ARE WAXING AS KULL'S PANTIN STEED REACHES A GREAT CLEFT IN THE EASTERN HILLS...



I KNOW YOU'RE TIRED, GAYOMART...

...BUT THERE'LL BE NO REST FOR EITHER OF US TILL WE'VE CAUGHT THAT DEVIL FELNAR.



UP THERE! THIS IS NO TIME TO FALTER, HORSE!

THIS IS THE WAY THEY CAME, FOR CERTAIN-- FOR, THERE'S NO *OTHER* PASS THROUGH THIS THOUSAND-MILE WALL OF CLIFFS THAT FORMS THE BORDER BETWEEN ZARFHAANA AND PRIMITIVE GRONDAR.



AND THERE *LIES* GRONDAR-- EASTERNMOST OF THE SEVEN EMPIRES...LAST STRONGHOLD OF MANKIND.



NAUGHT LIES BEYOND IT, THEY SAY, BUT EMPTY WILDERNESS STRETCHING ON UNTO THE UTMOST EDGE OF THE WORLD, AND--

--BY VALKA! THAT FLEEING DOT ON THE ROAD AHEAD--



IT CAN ONLY BE FELNAR!

KULL KNOWS HIS STEED IS WINDED, BUT THE ADVENTURER'S HORSE MUST BE EVEN WEARIER, SINCE IT BEARS A DOUBLE LOAD.



THE PASS IS GUARDED BY A LONELY WATCH-TOWER WHEREIN TWO ZARFHAANA'S STAND VIGIL.

ABOVE THEY HEAR THE THUNDER OF GAYOMART'S HOOVES...



SPREADING OUT IN A BROAD FRONT, EYES PEELED FOR A SIGN OF THE TWO THEY PURSUE, THE HOST MOVE FORWARD THROUGH THE SWISHING GRASS...

I THOUGHT THEY WOULD TURN SOUTH BY NOW, KULL.

AS DID I, BRULE.

WHAT MAN WOULD WISH TO RIDE VERY DEEP INTO LEGEND-HAUNTED GRONDAR?

IT IS DARKLY RUMORED GRONDAR HAS NOT EVEN A KING, BUT RATHER IS RULED BY *SORCERERS*... EVEN *DEMONS*.

PERHAPS THIS WEIRD LAND IS FRAYING AT MY NERVES-- BUT, AS VALKA IS MY WITNESS, I BEGIN TO THINK THAT *ONLY* SORCERY COULD--

..EH? LOOK YOU, KELKOR... BRULE...

BUT HOW THE DEVIL CAN FELNAR *RETAIN* HIS NARROW LEAD-- CARRYING THE *COUNTESS* ON HIS HORSE?

...THERE ARE *MEN* AMONG THE MISTY SHADOWS!

GONDARIANS, OR--?

STRANGERS, WHAT DO YE IN THIS ANCIENT LAND?

WE PURSUE *FUGITIVES* FROM JUSTICE, WHO FLED OUR OWN LAND.

JUSTICE? SPEAK YE OF *JUSTICE*, STRANGER?

I HAVE *HEARD* THE WORD ERE NOW... BUT HERE IN GRONDAR ON THE EDGE OF THE WORLD, WE SPEAK *LITTLE* OF JUSTICE.

WE SPEAK RATHER OF THE *WILL OF THE GODS*-- OR THAT OF THE *DEMONS OF THE DARK*, WHICHEVER WILL BE STRONGER!

THAT MAY BE... BUT WE WISH TO *PASS BY*, MAN WITH BEARD OF GRAY.



DON'T **BANDY** WORDS WITH THEM, O KING! LET MY **SPEAR**--

FOR ONCE, BRULE, IT IS MY HAND THAT MUST STAY **YOURS**.



WE HAVE **NO DISPUTE**, FELLOW, WITH GRONDAR, HER GODS, OR HER DEMONS...

EAST, YE SAY?

...ALL WE SEEK ARE THE TWO WHO RIDE **AHEAD** OF US, TO THE **EAST**...



YE RIDE... **EAST**?



AYE-- TILL WE'VE **CAUGHT** THE PAIR WE FOLLOW!



HAH! THEN RIDE ON, STRANGER!

RIDE, **RIDE**-- AND MAY THE WILL OF THE GODS OR THE DEVILS OF THE GREAT DARK BE WITH YE AT THE **END** OF YOUR JOURNEY!

WHICHEVER BE THE **STRONGER!**



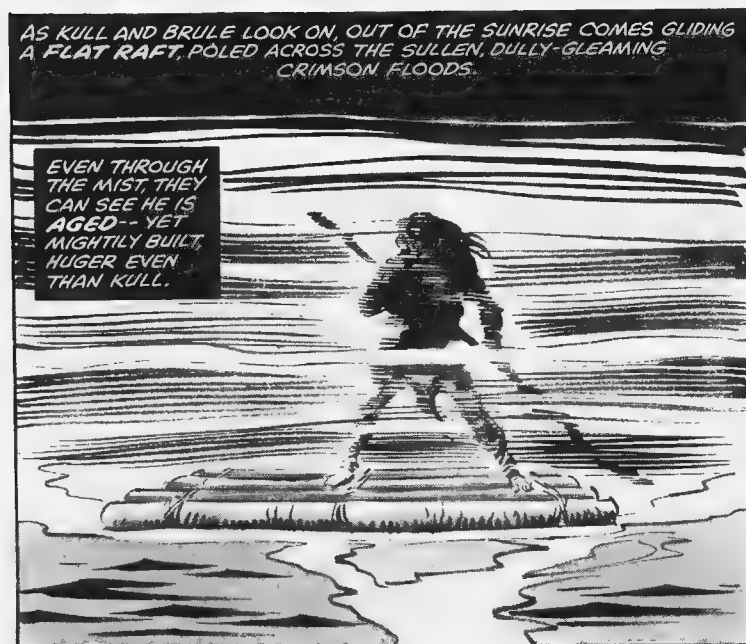
RIDE ON-- **EAST**, YE SAY?--**RIDE ON!**

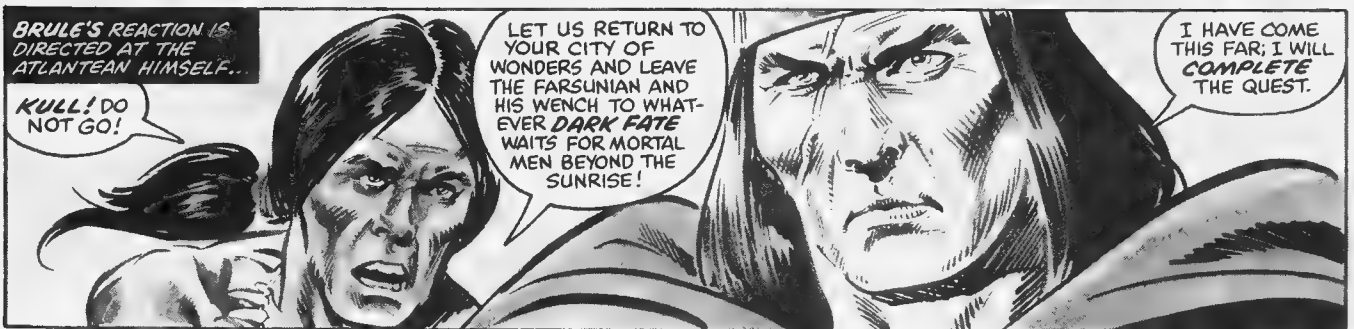
BUT REMEMBER THE **WISDOM** OF ONE WHO GOT HIS GRAY BEARD ONLY BY **LIVING** MANY MORE YEARS THAN IT SEEMS YE SHALL...



...THOSE WHO RIDE BEYOND THE **SUNRISE**--**RETURN NOT!**

THE ANCIENT'S COLD, RINGING LAUGHTER FOLLOWS KULL AND HIS HOST, AS THEY RIDE IN SILENCE PAST THE MEN OF GRONDAR... AND ON INTO THE **HAZE** OF NOON.





WHEN THE RAFT HAS BEEN POLED FORTH FROM THE SHORE WHERE THE VALUSIAN WARRIORS STAND SILENTLY WATCHING, THE PAIR FLOAT OUT ON THE BROAD BREAST OF THE CRIMSON STAGUS.



I AM OF THE **ELDER RACE**, WHICH RULED THIS CONTINENT OF THURIA ERE VALUSIA WAS, OR SHADOW-FRAUGHT GRONDAR, OR ANY OF THE REALMS YE KNOW.

WHO ARE YOU, OLD MAN, WHO FERRIES WANDERERS AT THE WORLD'S EDGE?

AND, AS THE DIM DAWN-MIST ENFOLDS THEM, KULL REGARDS THE MYSTIC FIGURE WITH SUSPICION.

BUT, VALUSIA WAS OLD WHEN THE PEAKS OF ATLANTIS AND ANCIENT MU WERE BUT THE ISLE OF THE SEA.

THE LAND I NOW RULE WAS ONCE LORDED OVER BY THE TERRIBLE SERPENT-MEN.



I KNOW YOUR THOUGHTS, KING OF MEN...

NAY, I AM NOT A SERVANT OF THE SNAKE; ERE THEY CAME HITHER, THE **ELDER RACE** RULED.

LONG WAS THE EARTH OURS, BUT NOW WE ARE GONE FROM IT...



...RETURNING TO THAT LEGENDED REALM FROM WHENCE WE CAME-- THE **EAST**, BEYOND THE SUNRISE.

'T WAS FROM THE EAST, YE KNOW, THAT IN TIME'S FIRST DAWN THE GREAT **KA, BIRD OF CREATION**, FLEW OUT OVER THE LANDS OF MEN.

WE SAW KA FLY, HIS EBON WINGS ENSHADOWING THE STARS OF TIME'S BEGINNING...



...AND WE SHALL SEE HIM RETURN AGAIN INTO THE EAST IN **TIME'S SUNSET**, WHEN ALL THINGS SHALL END.



AND KULL STRIDES INTO THE SWIRLING MISTS THERE, LEAVING THE FERRYMAN DREAMING OF ELDER DAYS.



THEN, AS THE NETHER SHORE IS REACHED, THE GRIM FERRYMAN SAYS NO MORE.

BEYOND THE STAGUS' SCARLET FLOODS,
THE LAND LIES FLAT AND DREAR
LIKE THE PLAINS OF HELL



AND KULL
PLODS FOR-
WARD RELENT-
LESSLY

AT LENGTH, THE DESERTLAND RISES SLOWLY
IN BLEAK HILLS...AND DAWN IS DOUBTLESS
IN THE SKY OVERHEAD, THOUGH KULL
CANNOT SEE IT.



BUT THERE
IS THAT
WHICH HE
DOES SEE:



FELNAR--
AND THE
COUNTESS
LALA-AH!

AT LAST, DOG OF FAR-SUN,
YOU RUN
NO MORE!



I KNOW
NOT WHY YOU
HAVE FLED MY
COMING SO LONG,
ONLY NOW TO
STAND WAITING FOR
ME-- BUT I'LL SOON
AVENGE THE INSULT WHICH--

YOU STILL
DO NOT
UNDERSTAND,
DO YOU, KULL?



AYE, THE FLIGHT
IS OVER-- THE
QUEST IS
DONE--

--AND THE
MASQUERADE IS
FINISHED!



THE DARK-FACED
MAN'S LAUGH SENDS
PRICKLES OF AN EERIE
PREMONITION RUNNING
UP KULL'S SPINE.

FOR, EVEN AS HIS FOEMAN'S VOICE
RISES IN A SHRIEK OF TRIUMPH,
HIS SWORD FLARES WITH A
TERRIBLE GLARE OF GREEN FLAME
LIKE SOME TORCH OF ENCHANTMENT!



BY ITS WEIRD
EMERALD GLOW,
KULL SEES THE
GIRL CLEARLY--

--OR
DOES
HE?

FOR, SUDDENLY, SHE
FADES-- VANISHING
INTO THIN AIR LIKE
A SWIRL OF MIST--



--A SMILE OF
MOCKERY ON HER
PALE FEATURES
TO THE LAST.

NAME OF
VALKA!

WHAT DEVIL'S
SORCERY
IS THIS??



AND EVER
FELNAR'S
THUNDEROUS
LAUGHTER
BOOMS ABOUT
HIM.

...AS THE MAN'S FORM BECOMES
SHADOWY, GROWING HUGER IN THE DIM
MIST, AS THE VERY FACE CHANGES...

SORCERY
INDEED,
O KULL--



--SORCERY THAT HAS
TRICKED YOU AND LURED
YOU NEAR THE WORLD'S
EDGE--



--WHERE YOUR GODS
CAN NO LONGER SHIELD
YOU, NOR AID YOU
AGAINST MY WRATH!



THEN, THE MIST CLEARS--
AND KULL SEES THE VISAGE
OF THE MAN BEFORE HIM.

AND IT IS NOT A
FACE AT ALL--
BUT A MASK
OF NAKED
WHITE BONE!

THULSA
DOOM!

AYE,
KULL OF
VALUSIA--
THULSA DOOM,
THE MIGHTIEST
OF EARTH'S
WIZARDS!

I
WARNED YOU
WHEN LAST WE
MET* THAT I
WOULD RETURN
TO JOUST WITH
YOU AGAIN--AND
THE HOUR
HATH
COME!

DID YOU REALLY
THINK A MERE
CRUMPLED CASTLE--
THE SHEER WEIGHT
OF COLLAPSED
STONE AND MORTAR--
WOULD LONG HOLD
ONE WHO IS
UNDEAD?

THEN IS
THERE NO
FELNAR?
AND WHAT OF
THE COUNTESS
LALA-AH, WHO
WAS CARRIED
HITHER?

*IN KULL'S OWN
LATE, LAMENTED
MAGAZINE. --R.T.



HE IS DEAD, OF COURSE-- SLAIN
BY MY OWN HAND, ERE I
DONNED HIS LIKENESS--

-- JUST AS IT WAS BUT
A *MIST-PHANTOM* FROM
THE WORLD'S EDGE WHICH
RODE WITH ME, IN THE
FORM OF YOUR PREVIOUS
COUNTRESS.

THE REAL
LALA-AH LIES
STILL IN
VALUSIA,
DROWNED IN
AN ENCHANTED
SLEEP.

THEN THIS WAS ALL
BUT A *TRAP*-- DESIGNED
TO LURE ME HERE ALONE,
FAR FROM BRULE AND
THE RED SLAYERS ?



AYE! I, WHO ONCE
SERVED THE *SERAENT*,
SWORE TO BRING
YOU DOWN, YOU CUR
OF AN ATLANTEAN
SAVAGE--



--AND NOW
THE TIME IS
HERE!

U
H



IT'S ONLY YOUR *WIZARDRY*
WHICH ALLOWED YOU TO SMITE
ME THUS, DOOM.

FOR, IT KEEPS
YOU STRONG, WHILE
I AM *BONE-WEARY*
FROM THE LONG DAYS AND
NIGHTS OF PURSUIT.



FIGHT ME
WITHOUT
SORCERY, AND
BY VALKA,
I'LL--

DO YOU THINK
I CARE *HOW*
I DEFEAT YOU,
FOOL?

MAGIC IS MY
LIFE-- MY
ONLY
LIFE.



SO FIGHT
ON, KULL--
FIGHT
ON!



FIGHT-- TILL THE LAST
DROP OF STRENGTH
DRAINS FROM YOU--



--AND
YOU FALL
LIKE AN
IMAGE OF
STONE AT
MY FEET!



FOR, WITH EACH STROKE YOU
MEET, MAN OF ATLANTIS, MY
CHARMED SWORD DRAWS
STRENGTH FROM YOUR ARM--
AND POURS STRENGTH
INTO MINE!

KNOW ALSO, KULL,
THAT-- FIGHT AS
YOU WILL-- I
CANNOT BE
SLAIN.

FOR, I DIED, AS
MEN KNOW DEATH,
LONG AGES AGO--



--AND NAUGHT
THAT LIVES CAN
DIE TWICE!



EXHAUSTION HANGS ON KULL,
LIKE A THICK ARMOR OF SOLID
LEAD... HIS LUNGS FILLED WITH
FIRE, HIS THROAT DRY AS
MUMMY DUST.

HE FEELS HE WOULD TRADE HIS
CHANCE AT PARADISE FOR A DRAFT
OF COLD RED WINE.

THEN, FROM SOMEWHERE BEYOND THE WHIRLING MISTS --

THE SWORD, KULL!
CHANGE SWORDS
WITH THE DEVIL!

HE KNOWS
NOT FROM
WHENCE
THOSE WORDS
COME.

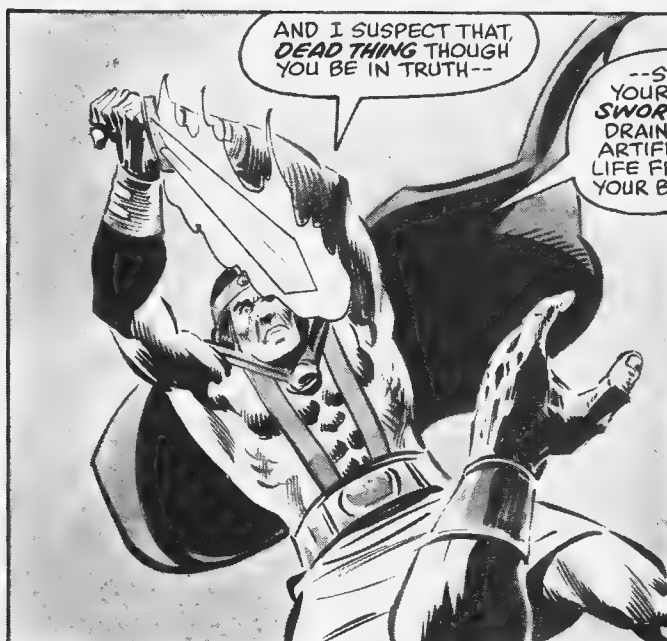
BUT IN HIS WEARINESS, HIS NUMB HANDS OBEY THE VOICE WITHOUT THOUGHT!

THIS IS A TRICK ALL
MORTAL SWORDS-
MEN KNOW,
THULSA DOOM--

--HOW TO
LOCK
BLADES AND
DISARM
AN ENEMY!

PERHAPS
YOU TRUSTED
OVERMUCH
TO MAGIC!





LOOKING ON WITH HORROR, KULL LEAVES THE GREEN-GLOWING BLADE THERE WHERE IT STRUCK, IN THULSA DOOM'S CHEST...TILL THE WIZARD'S BODY HAS SHRIVELED SLOWLY INTO A SMALL MOUND OF GRAY DUST.





THE TIGER OF ATLANTIS

A Comics Chronology Of The Violent Career Of
King Kull Of Valusia, From The Thurian Chronicles,
As Interpreted by Marvel Comics.

By JIM NEAL

I. EXILE

On the day that Kull, the outcast of Atlantis, became king of Valusia, he received a scar on his right cheek—a scar he would bear for the rest of his turbulent career.

Only a few close and trusted friends, however—Brule the Spear-Slayer, a Pictish barbarian; Ka-Nu, the ambassador from the Pictish Isles; perhaps Tu, the royal Valusian advisor—yes, and Ridondo, the minstrel who was once an enemy but who became a friend—would ever know of the scar that Kull bore in his heart. That scar was placed there about a decade before he sat for the first time on Valusia's Topaz Throne.

That scar was formed when Kull was a teen-ager, already a warrior for the Sea-Mountain Tribe of wild Atlantis. That scar was formed when Kull deliberately killed a young woman of the tribe.

The deed was done as an act of mercy, to save the woman from tor-

ture. But Kull never forgot the experience. Memories of the death of Sareeta returned repeatedly to haunt him during the remainder of his life.

Kull's parentage was a mystery to the Sea-Mountain folk, whose hunters found him when he was a small boy, happily playing with a family of tigers that apparently had adopted him during his babyhood. Naturally then, the tiger became Kull's totem—his "spirit-helper"—when he became an adolescent with the human tribe. Years later when the tiger spirit invaded Kull's body during moments of crisis, others swore they could see, dimly, the outlines of a huge striped cat surrounding the Atlantean's body.

Kull left the Sea-Mountain Tribe one jump—a long, high jump—ahead of spears and arrows after he hurled the dagger that gave a quick, merciful death to Sareeta, about to be burned at the stake. Her crime? She had dared to love an outsider.

With nothing but his sandals and loincloth, young Kull took to the sea,

where a passing vessel plucked him from the waves. The vessel was occupied by Lemurian pirates, however, and they chained the youth to an oar. Kull was a galley slave for two full years before he made his escape and swam ashore into northern Valusia on the Thurian Continent.

II. RISE TO KINGSHIP

Harsh and bloody years followed. Kull joined the outlaws in the wild hill country and learned swordplay, horsemanship, and battle-axe techniques. Probably during this time he served with a ragtag mercenary army recruited by King Asfodel IV of Lemuria to rid that island nation of a sorcerous menace, and it was Kull's blade that dealt the death blow to the wizard Rotath the All-Conquering (CB-37, "*The Curse of the Golden Skull*"). Returning to Valusia, the Atlantean rejoined his outlaw companions until he was captured by the authorities and sentenced to the gladiatorial arena in

Valusia's capital, the City of Wonders.

After an impressive string of victories, Kull was freed to join the Valusian army, and there he rose to command the feared Black Legion, the king's own regiment. The young commander then became the inadvertent foil in a plot to slay Valusia's despot monarch, King Borna—a plot hatched by Baron Kaanuub, who wanted the Topaz Throne for himself; Ducalon, the dwarfish count of Komahar; Enaros, the soldier who burned to command the Black Legion; and Ridondo, the mad young minstrel who simply disliked anyone in power.

The plot backfired, however. True, Kull did slay Borna, who put the scar on the Atlantean's face in their desperate throneroom battle. But it was Kull, not Kaanuub, who seized the Valusian crown.

All these events—his climb to power, from savage to king—are remembered by Kull on the day of his first triumphant parade, a day when his scar has barely healed—a day when he first meets Brule (KC-1, "*A King Comes Riding*").

With Brule, Kull discovers the menace of the Serpent-Men, an ancient race with the ability to assume human form. With the immediate menace conquered (KC-2, "*The Shadow Kingdom*"), Kull, Brule and a band of Valusian soldiers penetrate the Serpent-Men's headquarters, a jungle temple far to the south, and try to put an end to the creatures. There, however, the king meets Thulsa Doom, a mysterious wizard from Grondar, far to the east of Valusia. The sorcerer is invited to accompany the royal party back to the City of Wonders (MP-16, "*The Forbidden Swamp*").

In the Valusian capital, Thulsa Doom attempts to take over the kingdom, but his own sorcery backfires, and he sinks into the earth—or somewhere (KC-3, "*The Death-Dance of Thulsa Doom*").

III. THE ADVENTURER

Sorcery again threatens Kull's rule when Kaanuub, Ducalon, Enaros and Ridondo secure the aid of the wizard Melkori, who creates and brings to life creatures of wax. A hot sun and later oil and fire literally melt the menace (KC-4 "*Night of the Red Slayers*").

Going to the aid of the island nation of Damascar, far to the south of the Thurian Continent, Kull and his Black Legion take to the sea. They repay treachery with an act of mercy (KC-5, "*A Kingdom by the Sea*"). Back home again, Kull makes a new friend, the adventurer Zarkus of Zarfhaana, Valusia's eastern neighbor. The carefree axe-wielder saves Kull's life several times, but gives up his own needlessly in Qar, an ancient, nearly forgotten metropolis far beneath the City of Wonders (KC-6, "*The Lurker beneath the Earth*").

It is about this time that Kull travels with his army to the fringes of Valusia to rid the land of the menacing Cult of the Black Shadow, but finds its chief priest, Thuron, already dead (CB-52, "*The Altar and the Scorpion*"). Resting in Valusia's pleasure city, Kamula, Kull and Brule uncover and end another evil cult by themselves (SS-2, "*The Beast from the Abyss*").

Back at the City of Wonders, what begins as a simple vengeful prank played on Kull comes close to costing him his life. The king is persuaded that a cat named Saremes can speak. As a result, he pays a perilous visit to the bottom of the Forbidden Lake. Later he survives his second encounter with Thulsa Doom (KC-7, "*Delcardes' Cat*"). Then, bored with affairs of state, Kull ignores good advice and almost unleashes a terrible fate upon the entire world (CL-10, "*The Skull of Silence*").

The barbarian monarch from Atlantis launches a sea expedition and soundly drubs Lemurian pirates, but a sudden squall drives his ship to an island for repairs, and there Kull meets the fearful Leopard Cult, the tragic Demontur, a dictator and a werewolf (KC-8, "*Wolfshead*").

At home again, the king—with the aid of the noblewoman Nalissa and her lover, young Dalgat of Farsun—survives still another attempt on his life. The king's advisor, Tu, however, loses a favorite relative, but not his pride in his family—thanks to a royal lie (KC-9, "*The Scorpion God*"). Not long after this incident, Kull undergoes a strange metaphysical experience during yet another assassination attempt (SS-23, "*The Striking of the Gong*").

When Valusia is threatened by invasion from the northeast, Kull meets and defeats Queen Veria of Zarfhaana, despite treachery from

within his own ranks (KC-10, "*Swords of the White Queen*").

IV. KULL DE THRONED

Kaanuub, Ducalon, Enaros and young Ridondo enlist the aid of a sorcerer called Ardyon to make another attempt to wrest the Topaz Throne from the barbarian monarch of Valusia. Though Ducalon and Enaros are slain, Kull is captured through the magic of the wizard, who reveals himself—to Kull alone—as a disguised Thulsa Doom (KD-11, "*King Kull Must Die!*"). Moments before he is to be beheaded, Kull escapes, and the deposed king flees to a village that has been taken over by Kargon, an outlaw chief. Kull and Brule drive Kargon from the hamlet (KD-12, "*Moon of Blood*"). Within days, Kull and Brule are joined by Ridondo, whose poet's eye has seen what other Valusians have failed to see—that the true identity of the new King Ardyon is Thulsa Doom. Kull and Brule launch an attack on the sorcerer, but nearly die themselves and must flee (KD-13, "*Torches from Hell*").

Seeking aid from Kull's former outlaw companions, the deposed monarch, Brule, and Ridondo find instead a flying reptile and a strange cult (KD-14, "*The Black Belfry*"). Kull manages to slay the monster before riding on to seek help elsewhere (KD-15, "*Wings of the Night-beast*").

Taking to the sea to ask help from the Picts, the three are captured by Pictish servants of Thulsa Doom. It is the reluctant-to-fight Ridondo who engineers the death of the Pictish shaman Teyanoga and sets Kull and Brule free. When Kull and the minstrel sail away, Brule stays behind to try to free his own people (KB-2, "*Teeth of the Dragon*").

V. RETURN TO ATLANTIS

On another island, Kull catches a glimpse of the future with the aid of a witch, then sails on to Atlantis, on whose shore he undergoes another metaphysical experience. Another shock awaits him: Where a decade earlier, he had left a crude village, he now discovers a huge spired city (KB-3, "*The Omen in the Skull*").

In that city, created by the spells of the wizard Sarna, Kull finds as king his boyhood companion Om-Ra, and as general of the Atlantean armies his boyhood mentor Khornah. When Kull saves Om-Ra's life, he is made second-in-command to Khornah (SS-9, "*When a Tiger Returns to Atlantis*"). Though relations between the king and the ex-king are warm, relations between Kull and Khornah are icy. On a visit to Tiger Valley where he was found by his tribe as a child, Kull calls on a primitive deity and is answered by the Woman in the Moon—or someone. From her, Kull is given still another glimpse of his future, including a vision of his death on the sword of Thulsa Doom (KD-16, "*The Tiger in the Moon*").

Later, back in the city ruled by Om-Ra, the former king of Valusia becomes aware of a strange affinity between the wizard Sarna and the witch-woman Kareesha, but pays it little attention. Instead he becomes involved in a shipboard battle with skeletal warriors and a huge green tentacled sea-monster (KD-17, "*The Thing from Emerald Darkness*").

Almost immediately after this battle, the city is attacked by strange flying monsters from a jungle called the Great Mist-Swamp. Heading an expedition there, Kull and Ridondo find Khornah, now in possession of a magic device that sends the monsters to the attack (KD-18, "*The Keeper of Flame and Frost*"). Khornah and a crystal-plated monster called Shemenon are defeated through the sorcery of Sarna, and Kareesha—actually another aspect of Sarna—reveals the entrance to hell itself. With a reluctant Ridondo, Kull begins a descent into the bowels of the earth to save the world (KD-19, "*The Crystal Menace*").

At the bottom of the pit, the former king has his final confrontation with Shemenon, who abruptly turns on his new master, Sarna. Both apparently perish in a lake of fire. Yet as Kull and his companions at last climb out of the pit from hell, there is a hint that Kareesha—who shared a body with Sarna—may have survived (KD-20, "*The Hell Beneath Atlantis*").

Sarna's death apparently had its effect on the city of Atlantis, for when Kull and Ridondo return there, they find it inhabited only by a putrid, shapeless monster, which Kull manages to slay (KD-21, "*City of the Crawling Dead*").

VI. QUEST FOR A CROWN

Kull and Ridondo apparently take to the sea again, bound for Valusia in an as-yet-unchronicled voyage. It must have been an eventful trip, however, and it may be surmised that a storm—or perhaps the magic of Thulsa Doom—drove them well off course. When they reappear on the Thurian Continent's mainland, they have no idea where they are. (They do not discover until the events of KD-25 that they're in Grondar, northeasternmost country of the continent—Thulsa Doom's native land.)

Striking inland with the minstrel, Kull must have felt a moment of *deja vu*—he again sees a young woman about to be sacrificed at the stake (the scar on his heart all over again). This time, however, Kull is able to rescue the woman from the three cowed figures.

He finds he has made a friend—and more—of a warrior maid who cannot remember her own name. Kull names her Laralei from old Valusian legends, and they begin to fall in love—despite the fact that Laralei tries to persuade the ex-king to put away his sword, as she has done. Their pleasant moments together are interrupted when Ridondo is carried off by a huge devil-condor summoned by the three cowed figures (KD-22, "*Talons of the Devil-Birds*").

Ridondo is transported to a walled city. Giving chase, Kull and Laralei stop to ask directions from a wizard's helper, who drugs the dark-haired woman and sends the scarred Atlantean to die at the hands of a huge shadow demon (KD-23, "*Demon Shade*"). Using both his head and his feet, Kull escapes and slays the demon. He returns in time to rescue the revived Laralei. They find the city, enter it and discover Ridondo chained to an altar and menaced by a huge serpent (KD-24, "*Screams in the Dark*").

Saving the minstrel, the former king, and his woman companion receive a warm welcome from the citizens of the city, identified as Toranna, and learn they are in Grondar. They also learn the history of the city, whose king has been slain by a monster from another dimension, a monster who has taken the Toranna crown back to its home world. The three most powerful

figures in Toranna, the wizards Korr-Lo-Zann and Gar-Nak and the sorceress Norra, offer the throne of Toranna to Kull—if he can retrieve the crown (KD-25, "*A Lizard's Throne*").

Accompanied by Ridondo, Kull goes through the "gate" opened by the three magicians of Toranna and enters the monster's dimension. Unknown by the two men, Laralei also enters, and is captured by the gigantic monster, still wearing Toranna's crown on his central horn (KD-26, "*Into Death's Dimension*"). The creature, Gasshga, captures the woman and plans to keep her as a toy. When the monster sleeps, Kull enters—and Laralei, who has forsworn violence, awakens Gasshga to



save the monster from Kull's sword (KD-27, "*The World Within*").

In the ensuing battle, Kull seizes the stolen crown and tricks Gasshga into falling into the moat of molten lava surrounding its castle. Kull, Ridondo and Laralei are hurtled back through the magic "gate" into Toranna, where a triumphant procession awaits the city's new king-to-be. Laralei, already saddened by Gasshga's death, sees Norra's attempt to seduce the scar-faced Atlantean, reaches the wrong conclusion and flees the city, vanishing.

VII. A KING ONCE MORE!

Before Kull can formally accept the crown, he learns of the curse that accompanies it—and is confronted once more by the skull-visaged Thulsa Doom, who turns Norra into

a shriveled hag—her true form—and lets her die of old age before Kull's startled eyes (KD-28, "The Creature and the Crown").

Thulsa Doom transports both himself and Kull to the Shadowy Land, where they enter their final combat—with sorcerous advantage on the side of the skull-faced wizard. Fought to a standstill, Kull abruptly finds himself sprawled and exhausted on the throne of Torrana, with Korr-Lo-Zann about to place the cursed crown on his brow. Calling on his tiger totem for strength, Kull seizes the crown and places it on Thulsa Doom's skull, shoving the wizard into the throne's embrace. It is Thulsa Doom now who is cursed to remain forever on the throne of Torrana,



whose citizens begin to look their years—their centuries. Fleeing, Kull and Ridondo see the city collapse—and Ridondo produces the crown of Valusia, which he has stolen from Thulsa Doom.

In the City of Wonders, Kull again assumes the Topaz Throne, much to the joy of the citizens of Valusia (KD-29, "To Sit the Topaz Throne").

Kull's second reign possibly is quieter than his first—but certainly is anything but peaceful. Brule returns to the Valusian court, his mission in the Pictish Isles accomplished. For a time things are so dull that the scarred monarch begins visiting the House of a Thousand Mirrors on the Lake of Visions, and almost becomes addicted to what he sees there.

The affairs of state are neglected. The people grumble openly. Still Kull stares into the mirrors of the old

wizard, Tuzun Thune, and at last feels himself about to merge with a reflection—when Brule's sword, red with the blood of the old sorcerer, suddenly shatters the glass. It was all a plot of Baron Kaanuub. Kull shakes off the spell of the mirrors and resumes the business of government. (SS-34 "The Mirrors of Tuzun Thune." An abbreviated version of this story also appeared in CB-25).

VIII. KULL MEETS CONAN

Shortly after this incident, black sorcery again strikes. Kull, Brule, the Black Legion, and the royal palace of Valusia all are hurled forward eight thousand years in time. The Valusians are bewildered and confused in a country called Argos, in a part of the world called Hyboria. No one has been harmed—the only casualty, in fact, seems to be a fire-jewel missing from Kull's crown—but it is felt that Thulsa Doom must be responsible.

And when three strangers arrive—a sullen, blue-eyed giant calling himself Conan of Cimmeria, a crimson-tressed warrior-woman named Red Sonja, and a black-haired cutlass-wielder known as Belit—old Gronar, the much-tattooed Pictish shaman, warns of deep sorcery.

Nevertheless Kull crosses swords with the Cimmerian—and nearly loses his life half a dozen times in a dozen passes of the blades. Suddenly the Cimmerian backs off and produces the missing fire-jewel from Kull's crown, and old Gronar turns abruptly into something else—something that Conan calls a Stygian. The Stygian makes a further transformation, to that of a bat-winged thing, but an arrow shot by the Cimmerian ends the life of the creature—and Kull and his palace and all in it are bewilderingly back in their own time in Valusia again. The three strangers—Conan, Red Sonja and Belit—have vanished; the real Gronar shows up moments later demanding to know where the castle has been (CB-68, "Of Once and Future Kings").

IX. KULL'S LAST RIDE

Not even Brule knows, some time later, why King Kull chooses to ride by himself, unattended, to some unspecified spot on the seashore.

Telling no one where he was heading, Kull departs from the City of Wonders early one evening and enters a dense forest of oaks well after darkness. And one of the oaks seems to attack him.

During the ensuing struggle, Kull seems to sense as though receiving a telepathic communication from his woody opponent, the history of an ancient empire of plants—one that had faded before the advance of man, but one that would again rule supreme long after man had been forgotten.

Abruptly Kull finds himself beating bloody fists against the bark of a tree that is merely swaying with the sea breeze. Has it been a dream? Or still another metaphysical experience? (CB-10, "The King and the Oak").

If Kull ever makes up his mind about it, the fact remains unrecorded.

Meanwhile, why did he go to the sea unattended? He could have ordered out the Red Slayers, his personal bodyguard force, or the Black Legion in its entirety if he had wished. Why wasn't Brule, or at least Ridondo, along with him? Why didn't he simply sail down the river from the City of Wonders directly to the sea?

One possibility is that Kull had heard a rumor that Laralei had been seen there, somewhere on the Valusian coast. Kull had never stopped looking for her.

And although it is unchronicled at this point, there is the possibility that he found her—if not there, at that time, then in some other place and in some other time.

Surely the chronicles of Kull's turbulent reign are not yet at an end.

ABBREVIATIONS KEY

Seven magazines published by Marvel—not counting reprints—have carried stories about King Kull of Valusia: the scar-faced barbarian monarch from wild Atlantis. The issue number of each appears directly after the abbreviation for the magazine itself. Thus, KD 13 means KULL THE DESTROYER #13.

CB	CONAN THE BARBARIAN
CL	CREATURES ON THE LOOSE
KB	KULL AND THE BARBARIANS
KC	KULL THE CONQUEROR
KD	KULL THE DESTROYER
MP	MONSTERS ON THE PROWL
SS	SAVAGE SWORD OF CONAN

KULL I

by MARIE & JOHN SEVERIN

FIRST 5 PAGES

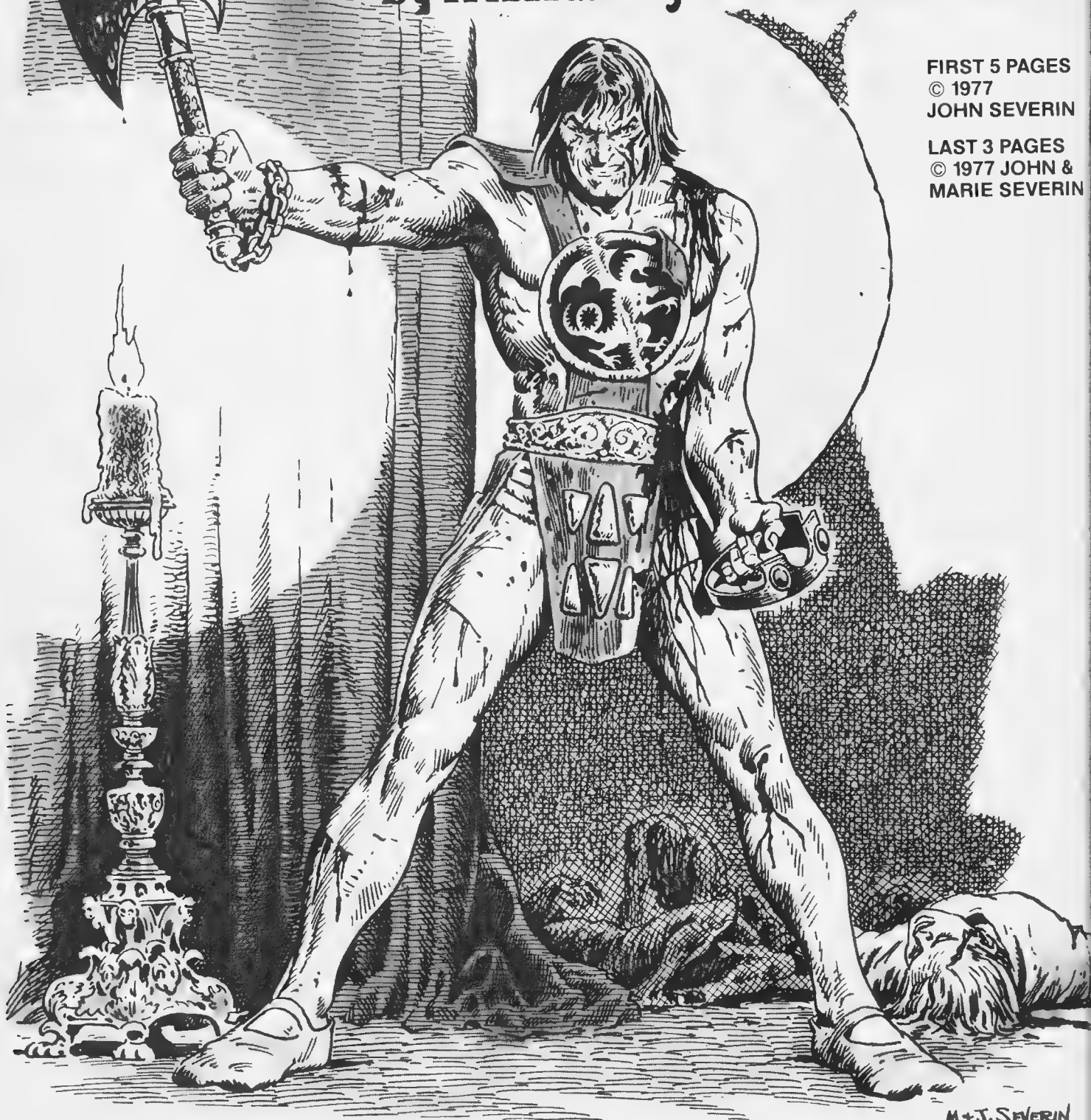
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JOHN SEVERIN

LAST 3 PAGES

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MARIE SEVERIN











M+J. SEVERIN





M+J. SEVERIN



The Legend Of SOLOMON KANE

Solomon Kane is a danger-seeking Puritan adventurer in the England of Queen Elizabeth I. Born around 1530 and reared in the Puritan orthodoxy, he begins to roam in his youth, possibly to escape the prevalent prosecution of the Puritans by the Tudor rulers of Britain in his day.



After the adventure chronicled as "The Hills of the Dead," Kane continues his wanderings in Africa. First, he is saved from cannibals by the ghostly form of his old friend, Sir Richard Grenville—then, he comes to the aid of a clan preyed upon by vicious winged beings, in a tale yet to be told.

Finally, many months afterward, in central Africa, and still carrying the voodoo staff he was given by the old witch-man N'Longa, he encounters a band of Arab slavers

(Adapted from "The Trail of
Solomon Kane," by Fred Blosser)

SOLOMON KANE
GAZES SOMBERLY
AT THE **NATIVE**
GIRL WHO LIES
DEAD AT HIS
FEET.



LITTLE MORE
THAN A GIRL,
SHE HAD **SUF-**
FERED MUCH.



--BEFORE DEATH
BROUGHT HER
MERCIFUL
RELIEF!



KANE NOTES
THE **CHAIN**
GALLS ON HER
LIMBS, THE
SEARS, THE
MARK OF THE
YOKES ON HER
NECK.



EVEN INTO **THIS**
LONESOME LAND
THEY COME! I
HAD NOT
THOUGHT--!



The FOOTFALLS WITHIN

A TALE OF
**SOLOMON
KANE**

FROM THE STORY BY
ROBERT E. HOWARD



WOE UNTO YE,
SONS OF INIQUITY,
FOR THE WRATH OF
GOD IS UPON YE!

THE CORDS BE
LOOSED ON THE
IRON NECKS OF THE
HOUNDS OF HATE,
AND THE BOW OF
VENGEANCE
IS STRUNG!

YE ARE
PROUD-
STOMACHED
AND **STRONG,**
AND THE PEOPLE
CRY OUT
BENEATH YOUR
FEET...

...BUT
RETRIBUTION
COMETH IN
THE BLACKNESS
OF **MIDNIGHT**
AND THE REDNESS
OF **DAWN!**

KANE RAISES HIS HEAD, GAZES EASTWARD, AND MUTTERS...

THOSE CARRON-EATING KITES MARK THEIR TRAIL.



HE SHIFTS THE BELT THAT HOLDS HIS HEAVY PISTOLS AND THE KEEN DIRT...



...INSTINCTIVELY TOUCHES HIS LONG RAPIER, AND GOES STEALTHILY BUT SWIFTLY EASTWARD...



...WHILE A CRUEL ANGER BURNS WITHIN HIM.

THEN, AFTER SOME HOURS OF STEADY STRIDING, HE COMES WITHIN HEARING OF THE PITIFUL SLAVE TRAIN.



ANOTHER HOUR BRINGS HIM EVEN WITH THEM, SPYING UPON THEM SAFELY.



MORE THAN A HUNDRED NATIVES, DRIVEN BY FIFTEEN ARABS AND SOME SEVENTY BLACK WARRIORS...



...THE LATTER OF SOME EASTERN TRIBE, MADE MOSLEM ALLIES BY THE CONQUERING ARABS.

THE PURITAN NOTES THAT ALL OF THE ARABS AND MANY OF THEIR ALLIES HOLD GUNS.



AND LIKE A BROODING GHOST, HE FOLLOWS...



...WITH EACH CRACK OF THE WHIPS LIKE A BLOW ON HIS OWN SHOULDERS.



NOW KANE'S FURY ASSUMES MONSTROUS PROPORTIONS...



...AS ONE SLAVE SUDDENLY FALTERS...



A HALF HOUR OF REST AND A LITTLE WATER WOULD HAVE REVIVED HER, BUT THE ARABS HAVE NO TIME TO SPARE...



...FIGHTING TO CONTROL HIMSELF, KANE PRAYS THAT HER DEATH BE SWIFT.

BUT THE ARABS ARE IN A MOOD FOR SPORT.



-- SUCH AS THE ARABS USE FOR SKINNING GAME!

AND KANE, SICK WITH HORROR, RECOGNIZES THE KEEN DAGGER--



AND HE ACTS WITHOUT CONSCIOUS THOUGHT...



BRINGING THE TALL BUTCHER DOWN IN THE DUST, WITH HIS BRAINS COZZING OUT.



THE ARABS HESITATE ONLY A MOMENT BEFORE OPENING FIRE.



...AND HE SEES NO CHOICE BUT TO MEET HIS FOES OPENLY, AND SELL HIS LIFE AS HIGHLY AS HE CAN.



INDEED, IT IS WITH A CERTAIN FEROCIOUS FASCINATION THAT HE FACES HIS HOWLING ATTACKERS.



THEY HALT IN SUDDEN AMAZEMENT.

THEN WITH YELLS OF SAVAGE RAGE, THEY FLING THEMSELVES ON THEIR LOAN DEFIER.

PARRYING THE WHISTLING SCIMITARS, WHILE THE ARABS' SHEIKH LASHES THEM ON WITH HIS LONG WHIP, AND SHOUTS--

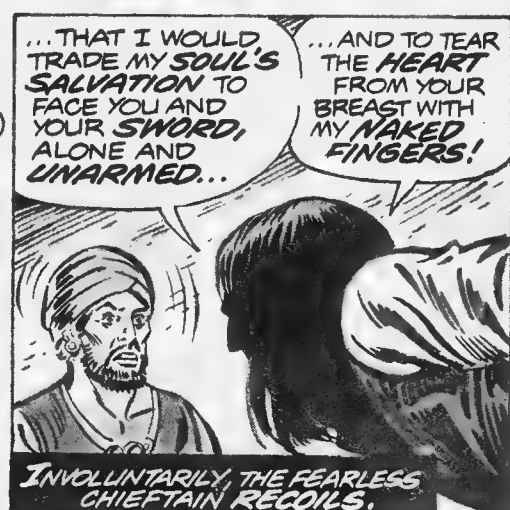
YET, ALREADY KANE'S LONG RAPIER PLAYS A SHINING WHEEL ABOUT HIM...

TAKE THE INFIDEL--



--ALIVE?!





RECOVERING HIS POISE, HASSIM STRIDES TO THE HEAD OF THE CAVALCADE...



...KANE NOTING THANKFULLY THAT THE RESPIRE OCCASIONED BY HIS CAPTURE HAS GIVEN THE FALLEN GIRL A CHANCE TO REVIVE...



...BARELY TOUCHED BY THE SKINNING KNIFE.

THE ENGLISHMAN ALSO NOTES THAT HASSIM HAS APPROPRIATED ALL HIS WEAPONS, EXCEPT THE CAT-HEADED JU-JU STAFF...

WHICH HE'D CONTEMPTUOUSLY CAST ASIDE.



PRESENTLY, KANE IS AWARE OF ANOTHER ARAB, WHO TIMIDLY RECOVERS THE JU-JU STAFF.



I AM YUSSEF OF HADJI. I HAVE NAUGHT AGAINST YOU AND WOULD BE YOUR FRIEND IF YOU WOULD LET ME.

TELL ME, FRANK, WHENCE COMES THIS STAFF AND HOW IT COMES INTO YOUR HANDS.



IT WAS GIVEN ME BY MY BLOOD-BROTHER--A SLAVE COAST MAGICIAN NAMED N'LONGA.



OLD YUSSEF NODS AND MUTTERS, SENDING A WARRIOR RUNNING TO BID HASSIM RETURN.

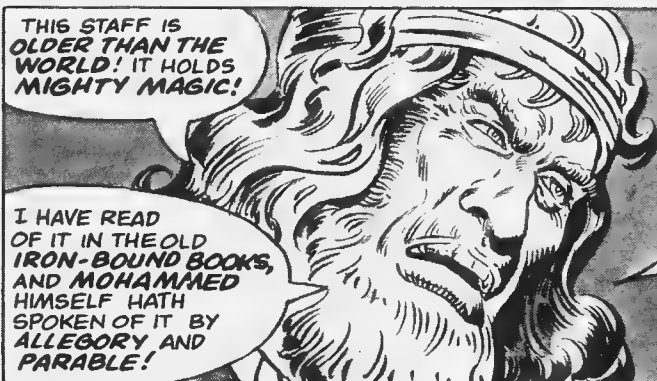


HASSIM...

...YOU CAST THIS AWAY WITHOUT KNOWING WHAT YOU DID!



AND WHAT OF IT? I SEE NAUGHT BUT A STAFF--SHARP-POINTED AND WITH THE HEAD OF A CAT ON THE OTHER END--
--A STAFF WITH STRANGE INFIDEL CARVINGS UPON IT.



THIS STAFF IS OLDER THAN THE WORLD! IT HOLDS MIGHTY MAGIC!

I HAVE READ OF IT IN THE OLD IRON-BOUND BOOKS, AND MOHAMMED HIMSELF HATH SPOKEN OF IT BY ALLEGORY AND PARABLE!

ITS CAT-HEAD REPRESENTS A GODDESS OF ANCIENT EGYPT! AGES AGO, THE PRIESTS OF BAST BORE THIS ROD BEFORE THE BOWING, CHANTING WORSHIPPERS.

WITH IT, MUSA DID WONDERS BEFORE PHARAOH AND WHEN THE YAHUDI FLED FROM EGYPT, THEY BORE IT WITH THEM.

FOR CENTURIES, IT WAS THE SCEPTER OF ISRAEL AND JUDAH. AND WITH IT, SULIEMAN BEN DAUD PROVE OFF THE CONJURERS AND EVIL MAGICIANS!

IT DID NOT SAVE THE JEWS FROM BONDAGE--



--NOR THIS SULIEMAN FROM OUR CAPTIVITY.

YOUR MOCKERY WILL BRING YOU TO NO GOOD END, HASSIM. I WILL KEEP THE STAFF, AND I WARN YOU--

--ABUSE NOT THE FRANK!



HE HAS BORNE THE HOLY AND TERRIBLE STAFF OF SULIEMAN... WHICH HAS KNOWN THE HANDS OF STRANGE PRE-ADAMITE PRIESTS IN THE SILENT CITIES BENEATH THE SEAS...



...AND HAS DRAWN FROM AN ELDER WORLD MYSTERY AND MAGIC UNGUESSED BY HUMANKIND.

WITH THIS STAFF, THEY FOUGHT THE EVIL WHICH WAS ANCIENT WHEN THEIR STRANGE WORLD WAS YOUNG... SO MANY MILLIONS OF YEARS AGO THAT A MAN WOULD SHUDDER TO COUNT THEM.

HASSIM ANSWERS IMPATIENTLY AND STRIDES AWAY.



...WITH OLD YUSSEF FOLLOWING PERSISTENTLY.

KANE SHRUGS HIS MIGHTY SHOULDERS, REFLECTING UPON WHAT HE KNOWS OF THE STAFF'S STRANGE POWERS...

IT IS MADE OF A WOOD THAT EXISTS NOWHERE ON EARTH TODAY, ITS HIEROGLYPHICS ARE MORE ANCIENT THAN THE PYRAMIDS.



AS FOR THE CAT-HEAD, KANE SOMETIMES HAS FAINTLY SENSED THAT ONCE THE STAFF'S POMMEL WAS CARVED WITH A DIFFERENT DESIGN...

...AND WHAT THAT ORIGINAL FIGURE WAS KANE HAS NEVER TRIED TO GUESS.



THE DAY WEARS ON.

WHEN ALL THE SLAVES ARE BUCKLING FROM EXHAUSTION, THE SUN DIPS, NIGHT RUSHES ON, AND A HALT IS CALLED.

CAMP IS PITCHED, AND, AFTER ALL HAVE EATEN OLD YUSSEF COMES TO KANE AND BEGINS A GAIN TO TALK ABOUT THE STAFF.



ARE YOU MEANDERING ABOUT THAT STICK AGAIN? HADJI, YOU GROW CHILDISH IN YOUR OLD AGE.



YOUR MOCKERY LITTLE BEFITS YOUR RANK, HASSIM! WE ARE IN THE HEART OF A DARK AND DEMON-HAUNTED LAND.

OVER THIS VERY TRAIL, LEGENDS SAY, THE GREAT SULIEMAN CAME WHEN HE DROVE THE DEMONS WESTWARD AND INTO STRANGE PRISONS.

AND WILL YOU SAY OTHERWISE?



A WILD SHOUT INTERRUPTS YUSSEF, AS FROM THE JUNGLE SHADOWS A WARRIOR COMES FLYING --

--AS IF FROM THE HOUNDS OF DOOM.



THAT'S ALL WHOM I SENT TO SCOUT FOR MEAT-- PERCHANCE A LION--

BUT NO LION FOLLOWS THE GIBBERING ALL.



HE SAYS HE FOUND A STRANGE MAUSOLEUM BACK IN THE JUNGLE...

...WHERE A GREAT HORROR OVERWHELMED HIM.



ALI, YOU ARE A FOOL AND A ROGUE!

NOW THE SLAVES WILL BOLT IN SPITE OF US. HASSIM, 'TWERE BETTER TO MARCH ON A FEW MILES. THIS IS AN EVIL PLACE.

UGH!



AND YOU WILL ALL FEEL BETTER WHEN WE HAVE LEFT THIS PLACE BEHIND, EH?

GOOD ENOUGH. TO STILL YOUR FEARS, I WILL MOVE CAMP. BUT FIRST...



"...I WILL HAVE A LOOK AT THIS MAUSOLEUM. PERHAPS SOME GREAT KING LIES THERE. NO ONE WILL BE AFRAID..

"...IF WE ALL GO IN A BODY WITH GUNS."



THEY COME TO A STRANGE CLEARING AMONG THE GIANT TREES... STRANGE BECAUSE NOTHING GROWS HERE.

AND, IN THE MIDST OF THE DISQUIETING GLADE, STANDS THE MAUSOLEUM.

KANE IS AWARE THAT THE AIR PULSES ABOUT THE GREAT BROODING MASS OF STONE...

THE NATIVES DRAW BACK, MUTTERING, AGGRAVED BY THE EVIL ATMOSPHERE OF THE PLACE...

SOME MIGHTY SULTAN DOUBTLESS LIES THERE.

...LIKE THE INHUMAN BREATHING OF SOME GIGANTIC, INVISIBLE MONSTER.

...WHILE THE ARABS GO FORWARD...

WHENCE COME THESE STONES? THEY ARE OF DARK AND FORBIDDING ASPECT. WHY SHOULD A GREAT SULTAN LIE IN STATE SO FAR FROM ANY HABITATION OF MAN?

...YUSSEF LEADING THE ENGLISHMAN LIKE A SLURLY MASTIFF, AS IF FOR PROTECTION AGAINST THE UNKNOWN.

THEN, MAKING OUT THE ANCIENT HEBRAIC CHARACTERS CARVED ON THE DOOR...

I CANNOT READ THEM...BUT THIS PLACE IS PREGNANT WITH EVIL FOR THE SONS OF MEN.

AND RICHES MAY LIE WITHIN.

LET US BREAK OPEN THIS DOOR!

YET, AS A WARRIOR BEARS A HEAVY HAMMER, A COLD HAND TOUCHES KANE'S SPINE.

IS THE PURITAN MAD?

STOP!

HASSIM, I HEAR THE TREAD OF SOME FIEND--

--WITHIN THAT PILE OF STONE!

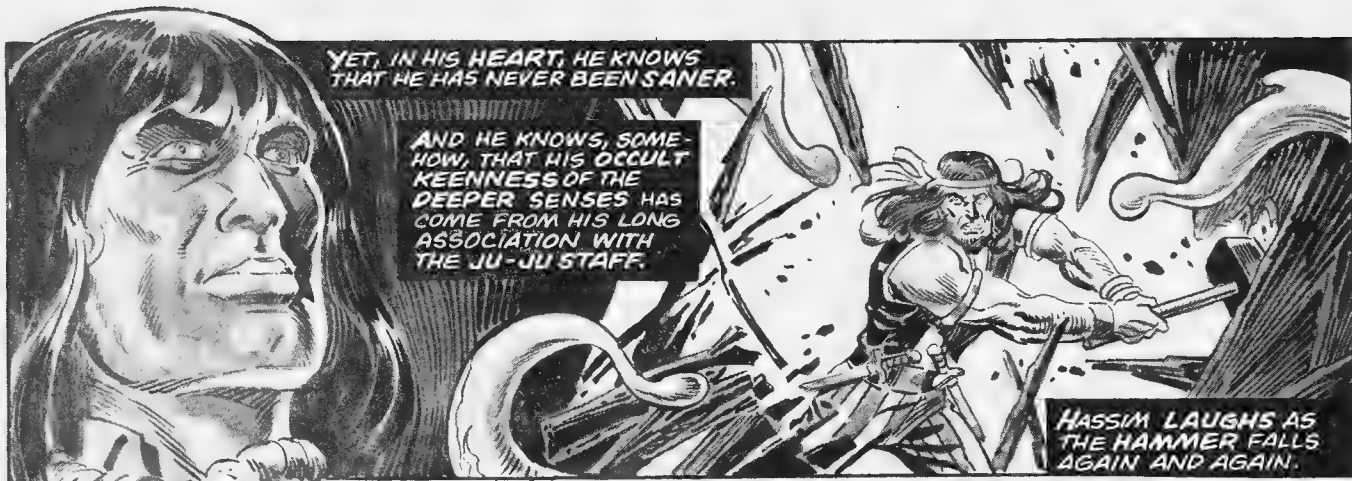
"I HEAR NOTHING!" COMES A QUICK CHORUS. "THE FRANK IS MAD!"

HEAR YE ANYTHING, YUSSEF?

NO, HASSIM, NO, YET--

OR DOES HE HEAR THE SOUND OF FOOTFALLS PACING BEYOND THAT DOOR?

KANE DECIDES HE MUST BE MAD.



YET, IN HIS HEART, HE KNOWS THAT HE HAS NEVER BEEN SANER.

AND HE KNOWS, SOMEHOW, THAT HIS OCCULT KEENNESS OF THE DEEPER SENSES HAS COME FROM HIS LONG ASSOCIATION WITH THE JU-JU STAFF.

HASSIM LAUGHS AS THE HAMMER FALLS AGAIN AND AGAIN.

FOR, NO TIGER-FANGED BEAST LEAPS FROM THAT GAPING ENTRANCE.

...AS A FEARFUL BILLOWING STENCH FLOWS OUT IN ALMOST TANGIBLE WAVES...

THE FEARLESS CHIEFTAIN SCREAMS...

...ENVELOPING HASSIM!

...HIS BONES SPLINTERING, HIS BODY BUCKLING LIKE A STRAW BENEATH A STAMPING HOOF.

THEN, THE DOOR HAVING BURST INWARDS--YUSSEF SCREAMS!

SHRIEKING, YUSSEF DROPS THE JU-JU STAVE...

THEN THE RED PULSING THING LURCHES TOWARD KANE...

...AS, WITH ONE VOLCANIC EFFORT, THE ENGLISHMAN BURSTS HIS BONDS...

THE THING MOVES LIKE A THICK CLOUD OF BLOOD IN THE AIR, CONTINUALLY CHANGING ITS SHAPE AND FORM.

BUT BRACING HIMSELF, KANE LIFTS THE ANCIENT STAFF...

...AND CATCHES UP THE ABANDONED JU-JU STAVE.

...FINDING THE CENTER OF THE HORROR AND CALLING UPON ALL HIS MIGHT.



AN UNNAMABLE, IMMATERIAL SUBSTANCE GIVES WAY BEFORE HIS FALLING STAFF.

HE IS ALMOST STRANGLED BY THE NAUSEOUS BURST OF UNHOLY STENCH THAT FLOODS THE AIR.



SOMEWHERE DOWN THE DIM VISTAS OF HIS SOUL'S CONSCIOUSNESS RE-ECHOES A HIDEOUS, FORMLESS CATAclysm ...

... THAT KANE KNOWS TO BE THE MONSTER'S DEATH-SCREAM.



DAZED AND INCREDULOUS, KANE PONDER'S THE SHAPELESS CORPSE OF THE HORROR...

... DASHED BACK TO ITS BLACK REALMS BY A SINGLE BLOW OF SOLOMON'S STAFF.

THE OLD TALES WERE TRUE, THEN...



... AND KING SOLOMON HAD, IN TRUTH, DRIVEN THE DEMONS WESTWARD AND SEALED THEM IN STRANGE PLACES.

WHY HE DID NOT KILL THEM IS NOW QUITE OBVIOUS:

HUMAN LIFE IS BUT ONE OF MYRIAD FORMS OF EXISTENCE.



THE PLANET MEN CALL EARTH HAS SPUN THROUGH UNTOLD AGES... SPAWNING LIVING THINGS LIKE MAGGOTS SPAWNED IN ROT AND CORRUPTION.

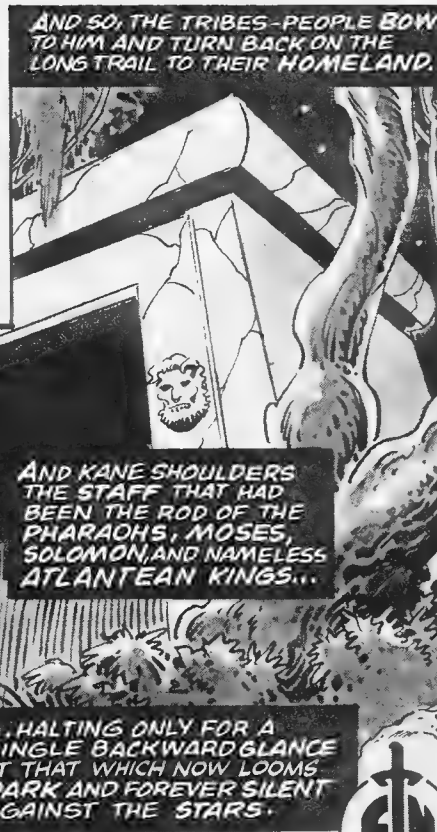
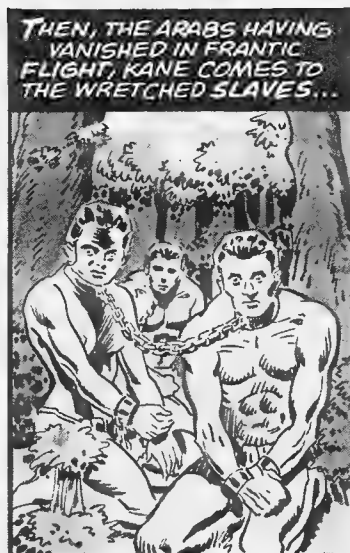
THOUGH MAN IS NOW THE DOMINANT MAGGOT, WHY SHOULD HE BE THE FIRST AND LAST TO RULE THIS WORLD?



KANE SEES THAT THE ANCIENT GIFT OF N'LONGA IS NOT MERELY A TOOL OF BLACK MAGIC...

... BUT A SWORD OF GOOD AND LIGHT AGAINST INHUMAN EVIL.

HE REVERES, ALMOST FEARS THE STAFF.



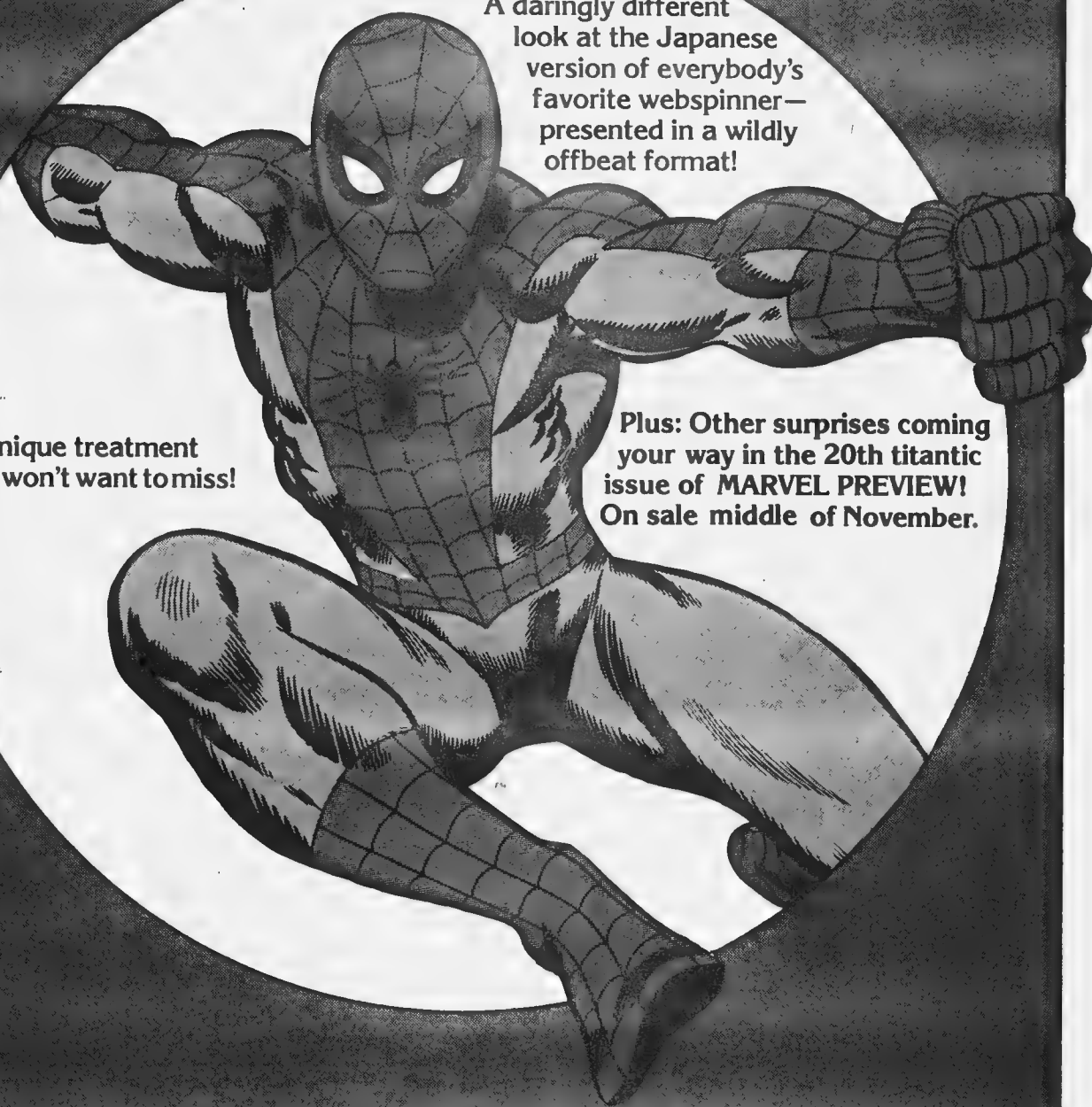
NEXT ISSUE:

the **AMAZING SPIDER-MAN**

A daringly different
look at the Japanese
version of everybody's
favorite webspinner—
presented in a wildly
offbeat format!

A unique treatment
you won't want to miss!

Plus: Other surprises coming
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issue of **MARVEL PREVIEW!**
On sale middle of November.



Letters

We plumb ran out of beads on the old Marvel abacus, people, counting the many many missives received on our special horror issue of PREVIEW. So many of you expressed a strong desire to see a regularly published horror title with a main feature that we were just overwhelmed. And what's so nice about the whole thing is that right here on this little bit of typewritten terrain—we can respond in the affirmative. Yes, there will indeed be an all-new Mighty Marvel horror mag debuting this summer... late August to be exact. And those of you eagle-eyed ad watchers who've been keeping track of the situation know what we're talking about. At just about the time this issue of PREVIEW hits the stands, it'll be joined by another black-and-white bonanza—THE TOMB OF DRACULA! And what's more it'll be by the same creative team supreme who brought you so many issues of Drac's magnificent color comic—Marvelous Marv Wolfman and Gentleman Gene Colan! So, without further ado, flap those furry bat wings down to your nearest newsstand and prepare to be blown away by the latest and greatest Marvel Magazine Department winner—THE TOMB OF DRACULA. Now, lest you think we're trying to sell you folks something, let's sneak into this ish's letter grabbag.

Dear People,

Your MARVEL PREVIEW #16 was absolutely fabulous! I especially liked Hodia Twist, in "The Hero Killer Principle."

I first tripped over Hodia Twist when I went to buy one of your many MARVEL TREASURES. But at the time was lacking about 75¢. I went to my parents and palmed a buck, but when I got back the treasury was walking out the door in a fellow fan's hands. Depressed I returned to the shelf and bought my second choice, VAMPIRE TALES ANNUAL #1. Hodia Twist was in "The Preying Mantis Principle." This laughable detective and his butler...keeper(?), has captured my interest now. First vampires and now a werewolf, (as if you didn't know those are my two favorite legends), then to top it off Hodia Twist dresses, acts, and even tries to be the very best detective in fiction, Sherlock Holmes!

So now you know why I'd like to see more of Hodia Twist. The Gene Colan/Tony DeZuniga art was the best I've seen for a while. Especially page 22, bottom panel, and page 26, panels two and four. I could talk all day about the feeling I got reading the story on the way to classes via MTA, (subway) but you probably are satisfied with my total and hearty thanks, THANKS!!

"Voices," scared the beans out of me, so I don't even want to think about anything so diabolical as that story.

"Death By Disco," was well written. The art I'm thrilled about, but I can't really talk too much about Lilith. Some of the fun and

terror goes out of a legend if the bloodthirsty maniac called a vampire is controlled, even has too much of an advantage over other vampires. Even the citizens of the city do not fear her power. However, the character sketch was well made, and many of the panels were fascinating. The series where Bert dances, and Lilith falls for him enter into a different realm than the comic book. Well I've talked too much about Lilith, and must get back to my finals.

Doreen Greeley
53 Colonial Rd.
Hingham, MA 02043

Dear People:

"Masters Of Terror" is by far the finest issue of MARVEL PREVIEW to date (aye, even surpassing "Thor the Mighty" in issue #10). Not only are all three stories illustrative masterpieces, they are also some of the most intelligently written stories seeing print in comics form today. The dialogue spoken between characters was fascinating! "Death by Disco" has to be the best story penned by Steve Gerber to date. What horrifying realism!

Keep up the good work.

Steve Murphy
12 Rucliff Street
Shrewsbury, MA 01545

Mr. G. thanks you muchly for the kind praise, Steve. And if you're into "horrifying realism" and scantily-clad she-demons running loose in the shadows of the city, then you'll be sure to join us for our bone-chilling back-up series in TOMB OF DRACULA,

to begin in the second issue. That little fear feature is none other than *Satana, the Devil's Daughter*. But it's not the Satana you think it is, nosireee. This little lady has a few surprises up her sexy sleeve that even the original would envy. It's all-new and it'll be brought to you by Macabre Mike Fleisher and Mysterious Mike Vosburg. Just another reason not to miss our upcoming TOMB OF DRACULA monsterpiece. Catch it.

Dear Editor:

A few comments on MARVEL PREVIEW #16.

But first—a few words on the letter column in #16, referring back to #14. It seems to me that Infantino received a harsh reception on his first *Star-Lord* art job; I feel it necessary to say that his work on that issue was one of the few enjoyable things in the book; and the only reason besides a complete run of MP that I bought the issue for. Comparing him to Byrne, as some readers did, is beside the point. Both are talented artists with unique styles; both offer the reader new vistas to explore. Infantino's handling of design and composition of a page should be studied by aspiring young artists for clarity in simple storytelling; an element seemingly ignored by many young artists. My views on the story, however, are less complimentary; while Claremont had a few good ideas with the Ship's relationship to Star-Lord, I found myself completely without interest in the actual goings-on. Moreover, Claremont's phrasing was often awkward and many of the captions were unnecessary.

On to MP #16.

Since Colan handled all the penciling this issue out, it's only proper to comment on his work first. And as to that, all I can say is that I've been a Colan fan ever since he took over Sub-Mariner; and especially since he did Iron Man, so many years back. My only complaint—if such a strong word is proper, is that recently he has been playing down backgrounds; but even so Colan's work remains wonderfully moody and intense. Personally, I'd like to see him handle a few straight detective stories and play down on the monsters.

I felt Palmer's embellishments were more successful than De Zuniga's; but then Palmer and Colan seem to complement each other. The work deserved better reproduction than it got; the new color magazines are definitely a step in the right direction, as long as first-rate artists turn out work which deserves the quality printing (which has not been the case with many of the color books.)

As in MP#14, I find myself stingy in handing out praise to the

Hodia Twists

Disco Discourses

Permanent Pregnancy

writers of the stories. The Hodia Twist story walked a fine line between satire of Sherlock Holmes and a straight werewolf tale; and while it handled the blend between humor and drama better than, say, *Foul Play*, I can't say that it was completely pulled off. I remain mystified at why Randy was so built up in the first few pages; it seems like you started one story which remains unresolved after page three; and then took the story on another path. The ending is unsuccessful in establishing any feeling for the boy if such was intended; if not, I'm not sure what the point was. Hodia Twist comes out as a parody of the Mad Sherlock Holmes; and yet we are apparently supposed to feel sympathy to him at the end. The whole story seems to have schizoid tendencies that are never wholly resolved. The motivating history of Twist on page 10, though, struck me as derived from the George C. Scott movie a few years back of a lawyer who slips into Holmes' personality as a result of similar events. However, the story had a few positive qualities; ponderous captions were kept, if not to a minimum, at least, under restraint; and the story had an easy flow.

Wolfman's entry was short if not sweet. "Voices" was slightly trite, and more than a little melodramatic; and the ending was totally expected. This story seemed ever so slightly influenced by a neat little Ellery Queen thriller of the early 60's, *The Player on the Other Side*, recommended reading for mystery buffs who like more than endless and senseless violent action.

Finally, Gerber's tale of a night at a disco moved quickly and without much passion; the escalation of violence merely turned me off as being an example of the above senselessness (despite Gerber's pretensions to the contrary). I guess it was because it was even more expected than what occurred in Wolfman's story; something more is desired, at least by this old and faithful reader.

Paul A. Zuckerman
1715 Caton Avenue
Brooklyn, NY 11226

Dear Sirs,

In general, I do not like horror stories. In more particular, I have not liked Marvel Horror stories. I find them too shallow. In very particular, and in exception, I liked the characterizations in "Death by Disco" in *MARVEL PREVIEW* #16, very much.

Steve Gerber's portrayal of T.J. Novello and Della Fiorelli as people for whom "style" is the most important thing in life, so important that they would rather die than change, could only have been improved if he had had a bit more room to let us get to know

them. That they would die rather than change is not new. Look at all the wars that have been fought to preserve religious, political, economic, and other philosophies. "For God and country!" has always been a rallying cry. Observe all those resisting technological change, with it's attendant social changes, in our country, now.

The undead have always seemed two dimensional, at best to me. Steve's portrayal of Lilith's innocent depravity, her remotely amused, almost clinical detachment, concerning thoughts and actions that would make sane mortals run or retch, or both, is completely appropriate. If one must prey on other sentimental beings for survival, the detachment is necessary. If one has never known any other life, or experienced normal human interactions, the innocent curiosity is inevitable.

This was quite a change from anything else of Mr. Gerber's that I have seen. My congratulations for a job well done.

The artwork was adequate. Color is usually good. I have kept an eye out for Tony DeZuniga ever since he did the only good artwork of Tigris back in *MONSTERS UNLEASHED* #10.

I'm not much of a letter writer to magazines. Usually I have nothing to say. If a magazine has dull or poor stories, I watch for a while and stop buying if it continues. If something good comes along, others say it better and sooner. I have not seen a comic or magazine sooner than two months out of date for six years, so writing to get printed seems futile. I hope that this letter will help encourage Messrs. Gerber, Colan, and DeZuniga to keep up the good work.

Gerald Perkins
AFSCF OLAD (87)
APO San Francisco, CA 96334

You weren't the only one to applaud Steve's masterful characterizations in "Death By Disco." We've surely come a long way here at Marvel from the stereotypical "I want to drink yur blud" vampires and ghouls that parade around the local drive-ins. Just as we feel super heroes have personalities and problems, even though they parade around in long underwear, so do we believe that even the most outre demons from the recesses of our imaginations can be made all the more chillingly real if they possess identifiable character traits and modes of behavior.

And by the way, Ger, please don't let your purchase of our little masterworks a few months late prevent you from setting down in print your comments and criticisms. We're open to thoughts and ideas at any time on any of our books, so, please keep writing, fella. If for some reason your particular area receives the Marvel

mags a bit late, then write a letter to our dynamic director of circulation, Fast Eddie Shukin. And that goes for the rest of you ladies and gents having trouble finding our titles. Let us know, okay?

One final thing. Where did you ever get a typewriter that plunked down such a beautiful typeface on the paper? Keep it up, pal, 'cause it was definitely easy on the eyes.

Dear Armadillo,

Like your previous horror oriented issues of *PREVIEW*, I primarily enjoyed #16 because of the all-too-rare reappearance of characters like Hodia Twist and Lilith; characters who have very nearly vanished since all those early Marvel magazine sporting horror titles vanished several years ago.

"The Hero Killer Principle" was probably the best feature in the issue. It was just as humorous in its own way as the earlier Twist tale "The Preying Mantis Principle"—and even stronger in the mood and characterization. I only regret that Mrs. Argot did not survive as she was an excellent foil for Hodia Twist. Perhaps they both subscribed to the same Agatha Christie Book Club. If nothing else, this story proved that even the most obscure of Marvel heroes do not remain forgotten forever. Who knows? Maybe someday we'll finally learn about "The Case of the Burmese Bat" which vampire detective Hannibal King made reference to in one of Marv's *Dracula* stories.

"Voices" and the private eye article were both somewhat interesting but I'm interested in more horror-oriented material.

The best thing about "Death By Disco" was the way Lilith finally acted as something besides Angel's rather sadistic guardian angel. Up until now, *Dracula's* daughter has played a very passive role in her own series. Speaking of Angel, though, don't you think a five year pregnancy is a little absurd? Let's wrap this subplot up quickly, okay?

Greg Cox
113 Highland Hall
Bellingham WA 98225

Hey, Greg, ya gotta believe us. We never intended Angel's pregnancy to go on for such an interminably long period of time. It's just that every time we'd get one Lilith story in print, there just wasn't any place to feature the follow-up tale, and so poor Angel has had the longest pregnancy in the annals of medical history. But don't worry, Greg. Somewhere, somehow, we'll wind up that little dangling plot thread even if Marv, Rick and Ralph have to take Angel to the hospital themselves and stay there with her until she gives birth. Is there nothing a Marvel stalwart won't do to please the fans?

Dear Marvel,

Do you realize that since its first issue in 1975, only one of the characters featured in the *MARVEL PREVIEW* has gotten his own mag (and that was only a one-issue try-out)?

How about it? Sales figures and readers reactions *must* be in oh issues #1-14 by now. What do they show? Are any characters favored more for series than others? I realize that you can't start 11 new mags out all at once, but couldn't you possible start out *three* new mags?

These suggestions should make everyone happy:

Blade, Satana, the characters from the *Legion of Monsters* and the *HAUNT OF HORROR* could all go in under a blanket horror title.

The Punisher, Dominic Fortune, Sherlock Holmes, Man-God (possibly), and Thor could all come in a new adventure (or mystery adventure) title.

Lastly, "Man-Gods From Beyond The Stars" Star-Lord, and "The Sword In The Star" can all be fit in under a new science fiction title.

Simple, no? Well, thanks for listening, group and, as always, Make Mine Marvel.

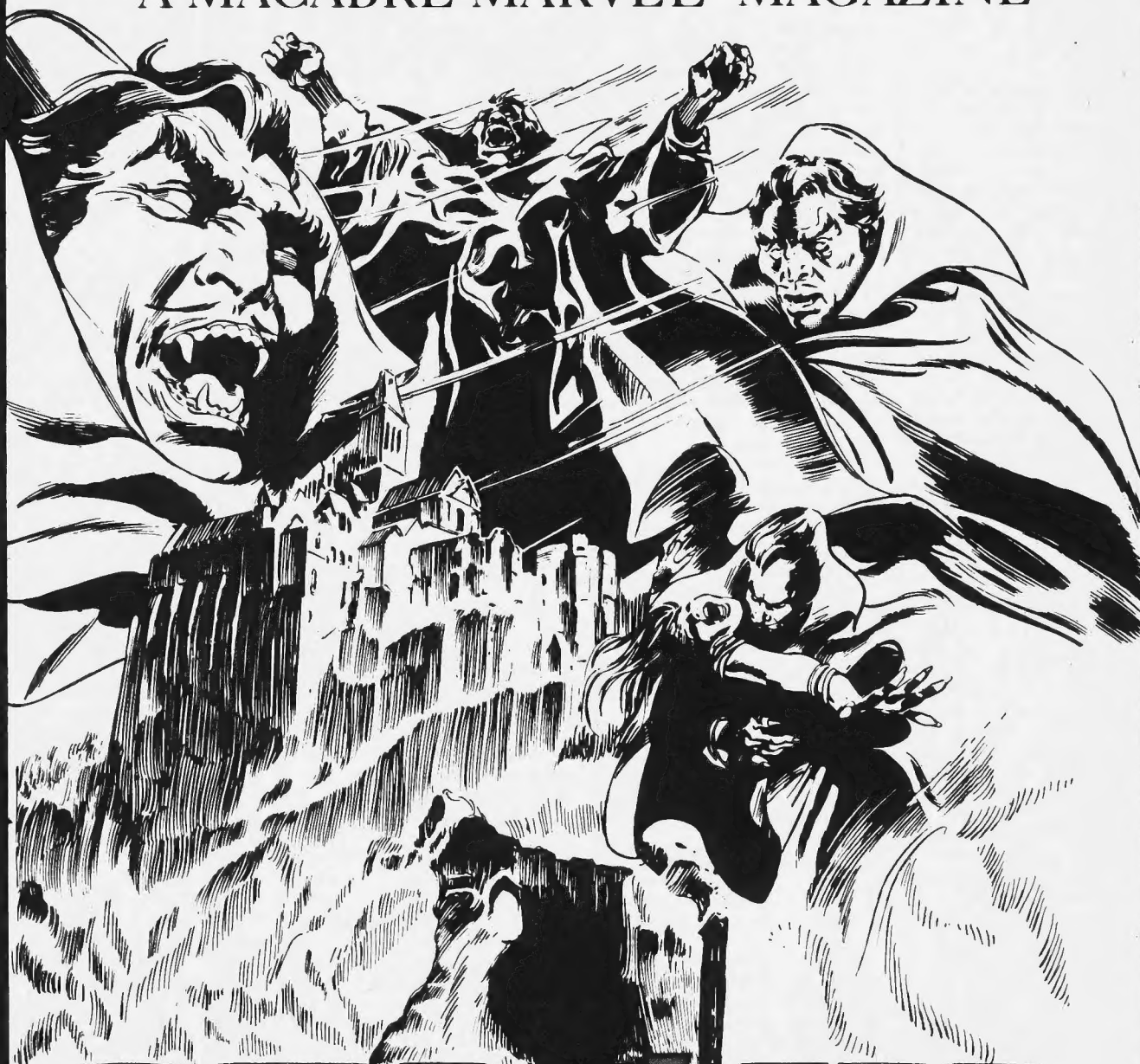
Paul E. Kusnerik
RD#3 Box 90
Beaver Falls, PA 15010

You bet'cha Paul. Thanks a bunch for the suggestions. We can comment on them at this time, and just hope that by the time this sees print, our wondrous words won't be woefully out-of-date. It's always possible *Blade* could appear in our spanking-new *TOMB OF DRACULA* title, though there are no plans to feature him currently. We've already commented on Satana elsewhere. It'll probably be quite a spell before the Punisher, Dominic Fortune, or Man-God appear in these pages again. Thor is always a possibility for an upcoming *SUPER SPECIAL*, although nothing has been started. Of course we do not as yet have a science fiction title, but you'll certainly be seeing Star-Lord again in *PREVIEW*. "The Sword in the Star" or "Man-Gods from Beyond the Stars" are still in limbo. Simple, yes?

And speaking of things easily done, let's take a moment to remind you how easy it is to sit down with pen and paper and dash us off a note to let us in on what you thought of this cataclysmic Kull issue and what you think we should feature in the future here. At the very earliest send all your bouquets and brickbats to:

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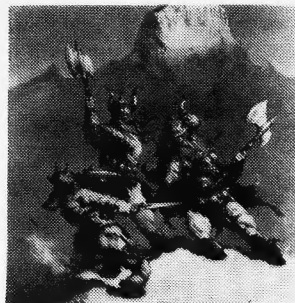
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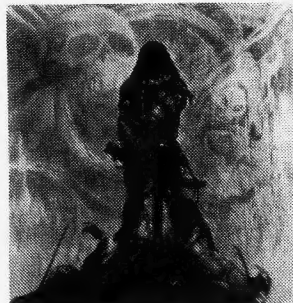
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